821.6
Cowl Did
46934

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

Clarendon Press Series

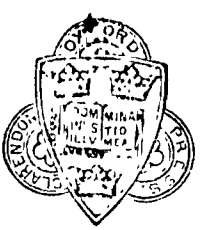
ENGLISH CLASSICS

COWPER

H. T. GRIFFITH

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.



PUBLISHERS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF

Oxford

Clarendon Press Series

COWPER

THE DIDACTIC POEMS OF 1782

WITH SELECTIONS FROM THE MINOR PIECES

A.D. 1779—1783

46934

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

HENRY THOMAS GRIFFITH, B.A.

Vicar of Felmingham, Norfolk

Formerly Scholar of Pembroke College, Oxford

VOL. I

Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

MDCCCLXXIV

[*All rights reserved*]

00046934

CONTENTS.

PAGE

PREFACE vii

INTRODUCTION ix

MINOR POEMS (1779–1781)

LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED (Feb. 1779) 1

THE PINEAPPLE AND THE BEE (Sept. 1779) . 2

ON THE PROMOTION OF EDW. THURLOW TO THE LORD CHANCELLORSHIP (Nov. 1779) . 3

THE MODERN PATRIOT (Feb. 1780) . . 4

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM (Feb. 1780) 5

THE DOVES (May 1780) 6

ON THE BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY (June 1780) 7

ON THE SAME 8

ON A GOLDFINCH (1780) 8

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE (Dec. 1780) . 9

THE DIDACTIC POEMS (published in 1782)

TABLE TALK (Dec. 1780). 11

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR (Dec. 1780) . . 32

TRUTH (Jan. 1781) 49

THE DIDACTIC POEMS (*continued*) PAGE

EXPOSTULATION (March 1781) 66
HOPE (May 1781) 86
CHARITY (July 1781) 107
CONVERSATION (Aug. 1781) 125
RETIREMENT (Oct. 1781) 152

MINOR POEMS (1781–1783)

FRIENDSHIP (Dec. 1781) 172
VERSES SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK 179
THE LILY AND THE ROSE 180
MUTUAL FORBEARANCE 181
BOADICEA: AN ODE 183
THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT 185
THE COLUBRIAD (Aug. 1782) 187
ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE (Sept. 1782) 188
THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN (Oct. 1782) 189
EPITAPH ON A HARE (March 1783) . . . 197
THE ROSE (June 1783) 199

NOTES 203

PREFACE.

THE student of Cowper's Poems should begin with the perusal of the brief Life of their Author which is prefixed to the second volume of this Selection. It has been placed there, because a knowledge of the facts of Cowper's life was thought to be essential to an intelligent appreciation of his greatest poem, 'The Task,' which appears in that volume, and on which those facts form the best and most trustworthy of commentaries. But it will be found that a general acquaintance with the main events in the Poet's life is, of necessity, assumed in the Introduction, with which this volume opens.

So many successive Memoirs of Cowper have been given to the public, and his own Letters partake so much of an autobiographical character, that the editor who is called on to present his readers with a new sketch of the Poet's life, finds his chief difficulty to arise from what our French neighbours call *l'embarras des richesses*. The great storehouse whence all subsequent biographers have drawn their supplies, is Southey's Life and Writings of Cowper. The edition of Southey's work which has been used in the preparation of this Selection, is that published in Bohn's Standard Library, 1853-5, in eight volumes; and to this reference is made by volume and page, thus (S. iii. 254). Of other editions of Cowper which have been consulted, the most important are, Mr. R. Bell's; Mr. J. Bruce's 'Aldine,' which is of the highest value

for its laborious collation of the texts of the various editions, especially those published during the Poet's lifetime; and the 'Globe Edition,' 1870, by the Rev. W. Benham, whose Introductory Memoir has supplied some important particulars, unknown to the earlier biographers of the Poet.

The general reader of this Selection will bear in mind, that in the Clarendon Press Series we have to consider, not what an author may have produced in his various moods of feeling, but what is in his best mood and best manner; as worthy of the careful study of those who have other subjects besides English Literature to pursue. Out of a regard to the requirements of this class, for whose use the Series was projected, the Editor has inserted many illustrative notes which may appear trivial, and would have been superfluous, to the more highly educated readers of English Poetry. On the same principle, he has not hesitated to give frequent quotations from those delightful Letters of Cowper's, which would of themselves have raised their writer to a high rank in English literature; even had he not written the Poems, on which they throw so much light, and which they help to invest with the personal interest that attaches to an autobiography.

H. T. G.

FELMINGHAM, NORWICH,
October 1874.

INTRODUCTION.

WILLIAM COWPER was emphatically a man, a gentleman, and an Englishman. Under these three general heads may be included such preliminary observations as seem to be needful to assist the student in forming a just estimate of this Poet's personal and literary character, and of his place amongst our English Classics.

§ i. *Cowper was a Man.* There are few of our poets so thoroughly masculine as he was, both in the matter and the manner of his writings. No effeminate man, no woman however richly endowed with 'the vision and the faculty divine,' could have written what he did, and as he did. Every line of his is marked by the strong sense, the practical aim, the firm grasp, and the trenchant force of a manly soul. If he studiously avoided the 'creamy smoothness' of a Pope,—and in his earlier poems he certainly did carry to excess his scorn of such 'whipped cream,'—he seldom lacked the 'fire that the fancy warms,' nor could he stoop to 'sacrifice the sentiment to sound.' Like his own 'proud swan' in 'Table Talk,' he could be satisfied with nothing less than 'conquering the stream by force.' Those readers who take but a superficial view of the story of Cowper's domestic life, are apt to imagine that he betrays indications of feebleness in his private relations. We shall presently see, that a closer inspection would shew them good reasons for reversing this disparaging judgment, and for crediting him, in his personal no less than his literary character, with what he finely terms 'meek manliness of soul.' Meanwhile all must allow, that as a

writer, whether in verse or prose, he everywhere displays the strong common sense of a powerful masculine intellect. When he trifles, he does so consciously, and of set purpose; and then, what 'admirable fooling' does he give us! —such fooling as none but a wise man is capable of.

Cowper's poetry, like his character, is utterly free from affectation of any kind. There is a straightforward simplicity about it which insures lucidity of style. He hated everything that savours of insincerity or unreality. They who know him stand in no need of his own assertion to this effect; but they can picture to themselves the curl of his lip, and the dilation of his nostrils, as he dashed off the lines,

> 'In man or woman, but far most in man,
> . . . . in my soul I loathe
> All affectation: 'tis my perfect scorn,—
> Object of my implacable disgust!'

Accordingly, we find in Cowper's writings nothing of the pompous and pretentious air of the sciolist, who is compelled to be oracular in order to impose upon the world a belief in his profundity. He never indulged in what is known as 'tall talk,' nor in fine writing for its own sake. He lived in an age when he could say of his contemporaries, almost without an exaggeration,

> 'Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ;
> The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.'

With such writers he could feel no sympathy. He would never have written at all, were it not that he felt he had something to say. And what he had to say, he said in a manly and outspoken fashion, without reserve or disguise; and studying the manner of saying it only so far as this might commend the matter of it to the acceptance of his fellow men. His aim was to set clearly before the minds of his readers, what his full meaning was; and he did not care to create the suspicion—so flattering to men of inferior powers, or of less singleness of moral purpose—that 'more is meant than meets the ear.' It came naturally to him to couch his utterances in such a form, as might tend most

directly to the instruction, the improvement, and the ennoblement of his brother men, for whom he wrote. He came before the public not with the design of courting popularity or admiration for himself, but because he wanted to do good to others. Having this single object in view, he was delivered from that temptation to express himself with a grand air of mystery, which appeals to authors who are less purified from a self-seeking spirit. The man of ordinary stature, or even the pygmy, when seen through the medium of a fog, assumes the proportions of a giant. On this principle, the writer whose primary object is the acquisition of fame, rather than the benefit of mankind, loves to envelope himself in an intellectual mist, through which he looms upon the startled eyes of the wayfarers of life, as a being of a height and magnitude almost superhuman. Not such was Cowper. It was nothing to him what people thought of himself, as the messenger of truth. He had a message to deliver, that was all — a message which he was sure the world would be the better for hearing. He wanted everybody to listen to it and understand it, and to come away with the sense of it firmly fixed in their minds. He would not have them to forget the message in admiration of the handsome person, the majestic bearing, the superb attire, the silvery tones, or the graceful gestures of him, who was but the medium of its delivery. Having a definite aim before him, he went straight to the point. The interests involved in reaching that point seemed to his earnest and practical mind far too important to admit of his sauntering along by a circuitous route, or deviating into every attractive by-path. And this solemn sense of the reality and importance of what he had to say, imparted a dignified simplicity to his manner of writing. The most critical eye fails to detect in his poetry anything that is open to the charge of mysticism, involution of thought, quaintness of conceit, mannerism, clap-trap, flourish, or nonsense. In a word, there is nothing of the unreality which is beneath the dignity of a man, but with which the poetaster conceives that his art is chiefly concerned. Cowper's were at

least the real utterances of a real man. He 'spake as he was moved.' 'I have inexpressible objections,' he once wrote, 'to all false pretences and affected exhibitions of what I do not feel.' When Mr. Newton, dubious as to the innocence of merely literary employments, would have had him substitute for them others of a more decidedly religious cast, he replied, 'Ask possibilities, and they shall be performed; but ask not hymns from a man suffering by despair, as I do. I dare not, either in prose or verse, allow myself to express a frame of mind which I am conscious does not belong to me.'

And this reality of the man invests his writings at once with a moral dignity, and with literary excellence. Everything that he has written bears the stamp of earnest purpose, vehement sincerity, and solemn energy. He was the true 'Vates'—one of those poets of whom he speaks in 'The Task,'

'Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp.'

Like the Prophets of old, he is speaking for Another, whose Divine ideas have been so powerfully breathed into his soul, as to have taken complete possession of his being; so that his very self is impregnated with the germinating thoughts of Another. This was the view which Cowper took of the work that had been given him to do. Under a consciousness that he was commissioned for that work, he wrote to his friend Unwin, on the appearance of his first volume of poems:—'I know there is in the book that wisdom which cometh from above, because it was from above that I received it. May my readers receive it too! For whether they drink it out of the cistern, or whether it falls upon them immediately from the clouds, as it did on me, it is all one. It is the water of life, which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more.' Like the Prophets of old too, he identified himself with the cause of God, 'his Master's interests and his own combined.' He was jealous for His honour, demanded for Him His rights, was earnest to press on all mankind His claims upon the service of their hearts. His spirit was stirred within him as he saw men set at

nought the righteous law of God. '*Facit indignatio versus*' was the cry of the heathen Juvenal of old; and the same sentiment swayed the heart of the Christian Cowper. He 'could not but speak.' His 'heart was hot within him; and while he mused the fire kindled, till at the last he spake with his tongue.' He was a very John Baptist in the manly fearlessness with which he rebuked vice in high places; while with ruthless hand he tore off

> 'The mask from faces never seen before,
> And stripped impostors in the noonday sun.'

Again, it is this reality of the man which accounts for his thoughts and expressions standing out, as they do, in clear and bold relief. We have seen, that the simplicity and purity of the general design which Cowper proposed to himself contributed to the transparency of his style in writing. Regardless of self, he sought to do good to his readers; and if he would do them good he must make them understand him. But the thought must be clear, before the language in which it is conveyed can become intelligible. If a man would teach others, he must first have been a learner himself. Now Cowper's thoughts were always clear and distinct. They were not, it may be, very profound; and possibly in some instances they were defective, or erroneous. But such as they were, he had made them his own, and he believed in them. He understood them himself, before he offered them to the public. He had not been content with merely looking at them: he had looked into them, and looked through them, and looked round them. He had been careful to cultivate an intimate acquaintance with them on his own part, before venturing to introduce them to others. It is not *an* impression that he seeks to convey; but *the* impression, for the stamping of which he has previously designed and elaborated the die. And the result is, that what he says is always distinct and definite, often strong and incisive. 'Remember that in writing, perspicuity is always more than half the battle. The want of it is the ruin of more than half the poetry that is published. A meaning that does not stare you in the face is as bad as

no meaning; because nobody will take the pains to poke for it.' This was the characteristic advice which a young aspirant to poetic fame received from Cowper. Many of us will think that he has here stated the matter too broadly; inasmuch as a fairly intelligent reader derives much of his pleasure and profit from following out the hints, and pausing to weigh the suggestions of his author. At all events, the principle thus laid down was that which guided Cowper in his own practice. His meaning is never far to seek. Whatever, therefore, his critics may have to say of his 'daring commonplaces,' they have little scope for the display of their ingenuity in clearing obscurities, or commenting on ambiguities in language or conception. And if we admit that the Poet's thoughts were at times so simple as to sound commonplace, we must allow also that a commonplace man would, for this very reaason, not have ventured to produce them. It is not an easy task to give such expression to sentiments trite and obvious in themselves, as shall invest them with individuality and propriety, in the form in which they are introduced. Horace has taught us this:

'Difficile est proprie communia dicere'—

and this is a difficulty which our Poet has met and overcome. In his verse are to be found many familiar thoughts, which his readers welcome as old and cherished friends; and it is with a kind of grateful satisfaction that they recognise therein

'What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.'

Once more, this reality of the man begets the fascinating realism of the artist, in his portraiture of Nature. Though Nature was ever the 'great inspirer of his strains,' yet he does not pretend to take

'Nature in *all* the various shapes she wears'

for his theme; for the simple reason that he has not seen her in them all. He declines to tell us all about that of which he knows nothing himself. He has his good-humoured laugh at the expense of the man, whose 'bonny Caledonian' song is

'All birks and braes, though he was never there.' He himself had never seen the Mediterranean Sea; and the good man, in his simplicity, regarded this as an excellent reason why he should not make it the subject of a poem. He had passed all his life in flat districts, where he had no chance of seeing anything that deserved the name of a hill; so he refrained from drawing on his imagination to depict mountainous scenery. But he had seen an 'eminence'; and he takes care that we also shall see it, and enjoy the prospect from it, with his eyes. 'My descriptions,' he wrote to Unwin, 'are all from Nature; not one of them second-handed.' This is the secret of the strikingly pictorial effect of Cowper's poetry. The reader needs no Ordnance map or Gazetteer, who has before him in 'The Task' the illustrated handbook of Olney and its adjacent villages. He feels as if he were moving through a picture-gallery, hung with a succession of landscapes and cabinet pieces. Here is 'The Peasant's Nest'—not reproduced with the mechanical and soulless exactitude of the photogram, but painted with the far more truthful, because more artistic hand of the loving student of Nature in her external forms of beauty. It is a Gainsborough. There is the Gipsies' encampment, with the 'kettle slung between two poles upon a stick transverse,' and the tawny race dancing in their 'fluttering rags' to the 'music of a bladder and a bag.' It is a Wilkie. Now we come upon a Hogarth:—the paralytic old card-playing dowager, borrowing a friend's hand to deal and shuffle for her, while she nods her crazy head at the 'corpse' who has been shaken down by his bearers into the seat, from which he has no power to stir. And now it is the Pre-Raffaelite school that is represented; and we marvel at the minute labour which has been expended on the marbles of the Schoolboy, the knitting-needles plied by Mrs. Unwin's busy fingers, or even (as the painters of this school will sometimes choose what the uninitiated are apt to deem 'subjects too mean and low for Art') the cucumber-frames in the garden. There are scores of such pictures to be seen in the Cowper gallery, and each is perfect in its kind: each

leaves one distinct and vivid impression on the mind of the beholder.

Nor does Cowper trouble us with the unreal Damons and Lesbias with which his predecessors and contemporaries were wont to stuff their rhymes. As West was the first painter who ventured on the alarming innovation of portraying soldiers in their regimentals, and has rendered Wolfe deathless by so doing; so Cowper has swept away the whole tribe of disconsolate nymphs and puling swains, and has given us men and women of flesh and blood in their stead. We cannot succeed in getting up a sentiment of sympathy with the artificial woes of the Delias and Corydons; but our hearts throb, and our eyes grow moist, as we see Crazy Kate 'roaming the dreary waste.'

A man of Cowper's stamp could not be otherwise than original. His style must needs be the outcome of his nature, and the revelation of his personal idiosyncrasy. He could not run in the ruts worn for him by his predecessors. There was in him that manly independence of character, which made it simply impossible that he should become a copyist of others. It is indeed in some respects a matter for regret, that he possessed so slight an acquaintance with the thoughts and style of our best English writers. He read little, and what he did read was not in the highest class of literature. The 'Monthly Review' and 'Gentleman's Magazine,' with a few books of voyages and biography, were sufficient to satisfy the cravings of his literary appetite. So far was he from bewailing his want of familiarity with the works of previous poets, or regarding this as any disqualification in himself, that there is something almost defiant in the tone in which he vaunted his entire ignorance of them. 'I reckon it' he wrote to Unwin in 1781, 'among my principal advantages as a composer of verses, that I have read no English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation, even of the best models, is my aversion; it is servile and mechanical—a trick that has enabled many to usurp the name of an author, who could not have written at all, had they not written upon the pattern of somebody

indeed original. But when the ear and the taste have been much accustomed to the manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it; and we imitate in spite of ourselves, just in proportion as we admire.' The same claim to originality, or individuality at least, was urged by Cowper with not less warmth (and not less justice) in respect to his management of the blank verse, which Lady Austen had persuaded him to adopt in 'The Task.' 'Having imitated no man, I may reasonably hope that I shall not incur the disadvantage of a comparison with my betters. Milton's manner was peculiar; so was Thomson's. He that should write like either of them would in my judgment deserve the name of a copyist, and not of a poet. A sensible reader therefore will not say that my manner is not good, because it does not resemble theirs; but will rather consider what it is in itself. Blank verse is susceptible of much greater diversification of manner than verse in rhyme; and why the modern writers of it have all thought proper to cast their numbers alike, I know not. . . I flatter myself, however, that I have avoided that sameness with others, which would entitle me to nothing but a share in one common oblivion with them all.' And once more, to Unwin (1784): 'My delineations of the heart are from my own experience; not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural. In my numbers I have imitated nobody, though sometimes perhaps there may be an apparent resemblance, because at the same time that I have not imitated, I have not affectedly differed.' There speaks the Man! 'No imitation: no affectation.' Cowper was far too manly for either.

The very form of religious belief which Cowper espoused, and to which he clung with such tenacity, even when it had ceased to bring him comfort, affords another illustration of the manliness of his character. To many readers this assertion will appear paradoxical. Do we not hear much in these our days about the Evangelical school being 'effete'? Have we not been told that some of its disciples would be a 'very good sort of men, if they were men at all'? And are we not continually being assured that our hard-headed and hard-

worked men of business, demand something more real and practical than the Evangelical system has to offer them, to meet their religious needs? Now it must be remarked, that the state of things a hundred years ago was not what it is now. At that date spiritual vitality in our Church had sunk to almost its last gasp. Severe as are Cowper's strictures on the bishops of his day, there were not a few of them, against whom even the powerful invective to be found in the 'Tirocinium,' was not unjustly directed. Our pulpits were filled by Churchmen who, if not sceptics themselves, seemed to regard the majority of their flocks as being so; and treated them to nothing but dreary and superficial 'evidences' of a Christianity, of which they troubled themselves neither to expound the doctrines, nor to enforce the precepts. Or, if moral duties were made the theme of the pulpit exercises, they were so carefully divorced from Christianity, that any virtuous heathen might have felt himself perfectly at home in the preaching-houses of Christians. And this dull formalism was too often accompanied with a general laxity of principles and life, which was not thought to be any special disqualification for clerical, not to speak of lay, communion. Against this state of moral and spiritual deadness, the Evangelicalism of the eighteenth century, like the Puritanism of the seventeenth, was the protest of the few men of earnest piety and practical faith.

In the present day a belief in some at least of the leading Evangelical doctrines, is demanded of every religious churchman, to whatever special school of theology he may attach himself. But in Cowper's days, they who identified themselves with his Evangelical views of saving grace were scouted as 'Methodists,' 'Enthusiasts,' or 'Fanatics'; and the profession of such sentiments by a layman, was sufficient to banish him beyond the pale of what was called 'good society.'

'The man that mentioned him, at once dismissed,
All mercy from his lips, and sneered and hissed.'

In short, any one who in 1764 would follow Christ as Cowper followed Him, must take up the cross to do so. He must do that, which it takes a great amount of manly independence to

do; must endure in silence to see the raised eyebrow or the shrug of the shoulder, to hear the sarcasm or the sneer, and—worse than all, to a man of fine feelings—to know himself the object of genuine pity to some who still live in the circle, in which he was wont to be welcomed and caressed. Now Cowper was a man of high family and connexions; a man who, however shy amongst strangers, was never more completely at his ease, than when enjoying unrestrained intimacy with his friends and relatives; a man, moreover, to whom the sympathy and love of those about him was a very necessity of life; and a man so sensitive in his feelings, that a contemptuous expression, or even the coldness of neglect, made him wince and writhe in agony. Yet this true man cast in his lot with the Evangelicals of a hundred years ago. And he did more than this. He forced a flippant world to acknowledge that there could be nothing weak or effeminate in Evangelical religion, as such:—for was not the manly vigour displayed in 'The Task,' displayed by one who was himself an avowed Evangelical? This point is well put by Cowper's excellent friend, John Bacon the sculptor, who wrote to him on the publication of that poem: 'I am heartily glad your book was written, because I trust the best interests of mankind will be promoted by it. There are many that will not read a professedly religious book. The peculiar phraseology of Christians, excites in such persons the idea of Methodism, which includes in it those of enthusiasm and nonsense. A writer on whom God has bestowed superior talents, commands their respect and attention: he will meet them on their own ground; he touches the springs of human nature, and sets them about what they seldom do—a thinking. And while they are detained by the liveliness and strength of the imagery, the beauty of the language and melody of the verse, who knows but the sentiment may enter into the soul?'

Indeed, it is a circumstance to be borne in mind, that the very element of religion, which has conduced in later days to Cowper's popularity as a poet, was that which in his own time interposed a barrier to success, such as any spirit less powerful and energetic than his would probably have found

insurmountable. Many of us can remember a day, when in the majority of religious households, Cowper was the Poet who shared with the author of the 'Night Thoughts' the exclusive privilege of *entrée* into the family circle. And it cannot be doubted that he has done good service to the cause of poetical literature generally, by overcoming the religious prejudices of many excellent persons, by whom Poetry had been classed with Novels and Plays, amongst the prohibited literature of an ungodly world. This prohibition is now almost entirely removed; and many of the youth of the generations that have succeeded our Author, have to thank him for the permission to expatiate in the flowery fields of modern Poetry.

On the other hand, it may be feared that some, who otherwise would have become readers of Cowper in the days of their manhood, and would have appreciated those rare merits of his, which appeal so powerfully to the heart and understanding of practical men, have suffered his poems to lie unopened, because they have been associated in their reminiscences of childhood with the nursery and the Catechism. By his contemporaries, however, Cowper was accepted not as 'the Bard of Christianity,' but as the Bard of Nature. It was not on account of his religion, but in spite of his religion, that he was hailed by them as a true man and a great poet.

Nor shall we be doing justice to the independence of Cowper's character, if we fail to notice that even in his theological creed he did not altogether renounce his individual judgment. This is not the place to inquire into the causes of a phenomenon, to which none of us are strangers; namely, that in matters of religion, in which the highest and eternal interests of rational men are concerned, they are the most ready to deliver themselves over to the absolute authority of others. We have all seen men, who on other subjects have been distinguished for the shrewdness of their judgment, and the caution with which they sift the evidence and weigh the arguments adduced, before admitting the conclusions urged on their acceptance; but who are eager to adopt a complete system of theology in the gross, with little or no examination

of the several dogmas included in it. Even in the Protestant Churches, which (in theory) clamour so loudly for what is somewhat absurdly called the 'right of private judgment,' the majority of men do in fact make it the first exercise of this right, to decide on the suppression of their private judgment, in favour of one or other of the various systems offered to their choice. And this is especially the case with men who, like Cowper, have passed by a sudden transition from a state of entire or comparative unconcern about religion, to an ardent interest in spiritual things. But there was too much of reality, and too much of manly independence in Cowper's nature, to allow of an unconditional surrender to all the details of the Calvinistic creed, with which he sympathized in the main. In his writings we mark the absence of some of the more repulsive features of this system; notwithstanding that the logical cohesion of its dogmas seems to demand of its disciples that they should accept the whole or none of them. Let us take a single instance. Not many years have passed away, since the staple argument for missionary exertions amongst the heathen was founded upon the assumption, that all to whom God has not yet thought fit to reveal Himself must, of necessity, be consigned to perdition; or (at the best) be handed over to what were termed 'uncovenanted mercies,'

> 'For ignorance of what they could not know.'

To this doctrine—the belief of which must (one would think) be appalling even to the verge of madness—Cowper could not be brought to yield his adherence; nay, he uttered his indignant protest against it—

> 'Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong,
> Truly, not I—the partial light men have,
> My creed persuades me, well employed, may save,
> But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
> Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.'

And in the same passage, the Poet sets himself to combat with another favourite notion of his own school; namely, that the virtue of the heathen, inasmuch as it is 'not of faith,' is sin. Against this he affirms the truth, that good is good all over the world, and that the good Spirit of God is the common

source whence heathen and Christian men alike draw all their goodness.

'Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
Celestial, though they know not whence it came;
Derived from the same source of light and grace
That guides the Christian in his swifter race.'

Again, though Cowper launched his theological thunderbolts against classes of men with the most indiscriminate denunciation, yet when he comes to apply his principles in particular cases, we are rejoiced to find the Man better than the Theologian, and his Christianity stronger than his Creed. His uncle, Ashley Cowper, was just one of those persons against whom, as a class, the Poet was wont to hurl his keenest and most damnatory invective:—a good, amiable, well-living man, religious in his way, but out of all sympathy with his nephew's Calvinistic views of religion. Yet we find the Poet writing to Lady Hesketh, on the occasion of her father's death: 'Let it comfort us now, that as his life was blameless, so was his death without anguish; and that he is gone to heaven. I know not that human life in its most prosperous state, can present anything to our wishes, half so desirable as such a close of it.' Nor could the repeated remonstrances of Mr. Newton, in his alarm at the growing intimacy between Olney and Weston Underwood, induce Cowper to banish his Roman Catholic friends from his affections, or to abate anything of his familiar intercourse with them. That he did not, as an Evangelical Protestant, instinctively repel the neighbourly advances of the Throckmorton family, and decline their proffered friendship, is a circumstance for which the political liberalism of an hereditary Whig seems insufficient to account. It shews that he reserved to himself a liberty of action, untrammeled by the restrictions which party prejudice would impose; while his spirit was too high to be cowed by the damaging reports which were soon rife in the neighbourhood, that he was about to turn Papist himself. He was too much of a man to become a thorough-paced bigot.

'But surely there must have been, after all, something effeminate about Cowper; because the women were all so

fond of him! Was he not content to bury himself all his life with an old woman? Was it not by Mrs. Unwin's orders that he set about his first volume of poems? And has not Lady Austen advertised to the world her supremacy over him, by imposing on him The Task? Wasn't he always admired and courted by the various women who came about him?' The objection has been made, and it should be noticed. But he who would bring it forward seriously has not only much to learn in the school of criticism, but betrays his ignorance of the nature of men and women alike. There is no occasion to refer to the peculiar malady of Cowper, which rendered the affectionate attentions of women more necessary to him than to others of his sex. It is simply the fact, that women did greatly admire him, and evinced an eagerness to devote themselves to his service, and to enter into intimate relations of friendship and correspondence with him. And herein we have a striking evidence of the force and manliness of his character. No woman ever admires an effeminate man. If she do not utterly loathe such a one, she may perhaps make use of him (so far as there is any utility in him), and may even pet him;—but it is as she might pet her lap-dog. In proportion to the nobility of their own nature, women are exacting in their demands and instinctive in their recognition of a higher nobility in the man. And in cases where they discern this nobility, they set no bounds to the homage which they are ready to pay to it. Though it be but in the matter of physical strength and muscular development, there must be some point in which the woman feels herself constrained to look up to the man as her superior, before she will yield to him her worship or her love. And women like an Unwin, an Austen, or a Hesketh, must meet with an exalted type of masculine superiority, ere they become sensible that they have found their master. At the same time, none are so absolute in their self-surrender to the object of their veneration, when once he has convinced them of the greatness and dignity of his nature. Now in Cowper there was the intellectual royalty, and the

moral and social dignity, which are so potent to assert their empire over the minds of those women, whose own instincts are sufficiently elevated to recognise in these something like a realisation of their idea of true manliness. But in conjunction with these distinctively masculine attributes, there was in him also a feminine tenderness, and a refined and delicate taste, which enthralled their sympathies. This combination of the masculine and feminine elements, in one and the same nature, is rare indeed: but it is that which is essential to the production of the grandest type of manhood. For what is feminine is not the contradictory of what is masculine, but is complementary of it. To Cowper might be not improperly applied the eloquent words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who said of a man of similar character in this respect: 'He is a perfect specimen of the essential difference between the feminine and the effeminate; and illustrates the truth, that, in all real genius and all real sanctity, this feminine is a marked ingredient; refining, elevating, purifying, beautifying every other quality, and shedding over it the fragrance of a virgin delicacy.' What has been said of Cowper's Letters is equally true of his entire character, of which his Letters were the genuine and unconscious outgrowth and expression:—'They unite the playfulness of a child, the affectionateness of a woman, and the strong sense of a man.' What character can be nobler or more beautiful than that, in which the childlike element is found ever diffusing its grace and freshness through the maturities of age; while at the same time the feminine element is diffusing all its purity and tenderness through the activities of manliness? Surely the ideal Man is he who has gathered up into himself all that is best and noblest in humanity, in its every subdivision of age and sex. To have gained the mature judgment which is only to be acquired by experience and thought, and yet not to have lost the innocence, the susceptibility to impressions, and the light-hearted sportiveness of the child; to be possessed of the strength of body, the firmness of will, the power of intellect, and the harmony of moral complete-

ness, which constitute him a real 'lord of creation,' yet to have been delivered from whatever might have been hard or coarse or unloving in heart and character, by the concurrent development of a warmth of sympathy and a refinement of feeling, such as are more commonly found in the gentler sex;—this it is, to be a true and a great Man.

And this leads us up to our next consideration: namely, that

§ ii. *Cowper was a Gentleman.* He was a gentleman by blood and descent. The son of a Clergyman, the grandson of a Judge, the great-nephew of a Lord High Chancellor and Peer of the Realm, and the great-grandson of a Baronet enjoying a title of Charles the First's creation; he was descended, through a line of merchant-princes whose name is perpetuated in the local nomenclature of the City of London[1], from John Cooper[2], who was settled on his own lands at Strode in the parish of Slinford in Sussex, as early as the sixth year of Edward IV (1466). His mother derived her ancestry, through a succession of six female descents, from Mary, the sister of Queen Ann Boleyne, and so (through the families of Howard and Mowbray) by four different lines from King Henry III[3].

Cowper was a Gentleman by education and profession: brought up in one of the oldest and best of our public schools, and afterwards called to the Bar; and moving constantly in good society throughout those earlier years of life, which are the most influential in the formation of a man's character and manners.

[1] 'Cowper's Court' in Cornhill is named after the mercantile ancestors of the Poet.

[2] This was the original orthography, as it is still the correct pronunciation, of the Poet's family name. Lord John Townshend, in a poetical reply to 'A Riddle' of our author's (1780), makes 'Cowper' rhyme to 'trooper.' The first Earl Cowper not unfrequently signed his name as *Cooper* (see letters of his in Campbell's 'Lives of the Chancellors'): and his descendant, the present Earl, pronounces it in the same way.

[3] See note on the 'Receipt of my Mother's Picture,' l. 108 (vol. ii. p. 253). Those who are curious in such matters may see the 'Cowper and Donne Pedigree' (attested by the Poet and other members of the family) copied from the Heralds' Office (Norf. i. p. 96) in Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica for March 1873, p. 330.

Above all, Cowper was a Gentleman by virtue of his possessing all those nameless graces and elegances, alike of mind and manners, which neither blood nor education can bestow, though they are never found in perfection where these are lacking; and which, while they defy enumeration or definition, are at a glance recognised and felt by all who are brought into contact with the possessors of them. The man would be a bold one, who should venture to say what gentlemanly feeling is, in the abstract. But so far as it finds its sphere of exercise in social life, perhaps no single word would more aptly designate it than *sympathy*. He most truly shews himself to be a gentleman, in the mutual relations of man with man, who is best enabled by nature and practice to place himself *en rapport* with his fellow men; and to discover, and identify himself with, the highest nature of those into whose company he happens to be thrown—whether they be men or women, and whether equal, superior, or inferior to himself in the social scale. Taking his stand upon his common humanity—which with him is neither a barren theory nor a grudging 'admission,' but a simple fact of history—he has the faculty of discerning the degree and the direction in which that common humanity is likely to be modified in special cases. And this faculty enables him to adapt himself to the various characters and circumstances of the special class, or the individual specimen of humanity, to which he finds himself for the time being placed in relation.

To be a thorough gentleman, a man must be thoroughly genial: and what is this but to say, that he must exercise an unbounded sympathy with his brother men? The sphere within which this universal sympathy can be actively exerted, must be limited by the circumstances of a man's position in life: and in Cowper's secluded existence it was actually much more strictly limited than in the case of others, whose health presents no impediment to their taking a full share in the active duties of a busy life. But it existed in him in unusual strength, as was testified by all who had the happiness to come within the 'charmed circle' of its in-

fluence. It was this depth of sympathy, this merging of self into the being of those around him, this identification of his whole nature with the interests, the comforts, and the happiness of others, which made Cowper the object of such vehement and enthusiastic affection on the part of men, as well as women. Had he been a woman himself, could he have inspired a more earnest love than that with which he was regarded by William Unwin, by Bull, by Rose, by Johnson, by Hayley, and even by the shrewd lawyer Hill, or a rigid divine like Newton? He had sympathy for all, and sympathy with them all.

It is this wide sympathy of Cowper's nature which makes us not only bear with equanimity, but welcome with delight, the continual references to his own occupations, and matters of individual interest, which otherwise we might be disposed to dislike as wearisome, or to condemn as egotistical. One of the special charms of 'The Task' arises from the fact that it is full of the Poet himself. So much is this the case, that in this poem in particular he may be said (in the words of another) 'to bind up as it were a portrait of his face along with his writings.' Yet it never occurs to his readers to charge him with egotism on this account. It is so evident to them, as they read, that he is not *thinking* of self; but rather laying himself out for their instruction and gratification. He seems to take us into his confidence, as if we were his personal friends, to whom nothing can be uninteresting that has an interest for him. He has not the least hesitation in claiming our sympathy, and (so to speak) reckoning on it as a matter of course, because he is fully prepared to give us his own in exchange for it. He never irritates us by the coarse self-assertion, which is the unmistakeable indication of a vulgar mind; nor annoys us with that petty self-consciousness, which besets the man who is uncertain of his social status. And yet we are fully aware that it is William Cowper, and none other, who is talking to us throughout that delightful poem, which Charles Lamb so happily described as 'the divine chit-chat of Cowper.

In this sense, and to this extent, we must class Cowper amongst those who are called 'subjective poets.' There are some poets, from whose writings we gain little or no insight into the character, or the personal experiences, of their author. They might have been written by anybody else; and still the interest excited, and the effect produced by them, would have been much the same. These poets tell their tale, which is often of a nature to delight and instruct their auditory; but they keep themselves in the background. They do not introduce themselves to their readers; they give no indications by which we may track them to their home, and make ourselves personally acquainted with them. We read their works through, and when we have done so we have to confess that we remain almost as entirely strangers to the men themselves, as we were at first. From their choice of a subject, indeed, and their manner of handling it, we may form some general conjecture as to their probable character, disposition, or modes of thought and life: but such conjectures may be after all, and often are, very wide of the mark. Through ever-lengthening ages all lovers of what is grandest and noblest in poetry have read, and read again, 'the tale of Troy divine': but what have they learned from it respecting Homer? Has he made to them any personal revelation through the magic medium of his song? Has he told them anything of the story of his life; of his birth and parentage, of his education, his associations, his position in the world, his political creed? Can we even at this day say for certain, that there ever was a man named Homer, or that there were not twenty Homers? No: for he was an 'Objective Poet.' But there is another class of poets: men whom we see before us almost in bodily presence, reflected in the mirror of their verse; men who have made themselves familiar to us, though they died long before we were born; men with whom we seem to be holding a living intercourse, and to be engaged in actual conversation, when we take their works into our hands. And therefore we call them 'Subjective Poets.' For, as Sir William Hamilton tells us, 'In

the philosophy of mind, *subjective* denotes what is to be referred to the thinking subject, the *Ego; objective* what belongs to the object of thought, the *non-ego.*' In all branches of Art there must be these two distinct classes of artists. In painting, for example, we are told that 'the term *subjective* is used to indicate that the representation of an object or event is modified by, or subjected to, the idiosyncrasy of the artist; and this in contradistinction to *objective*, when the object is represented with strict individuality. Rubens and Rembrandt were subjective painters; the Dutch and Flemish painters of still life, on the other hand, have been *objective* in their works.' And in like manner we say that Cowper was a subjective poet. The man whose

> 'eyes see all around in gloom or glow
> Hues of their own, fresh borrow'd from the heart,'

takes a subjective view of the scene outspread before him; and according to his varying mood of feeling at the time, will his description of what his eyes 'see all around' vary also. Cowper sets Nature before our gaze, as the fitting object of our admiration and reverent study. But he has brought his own ideas to the contemplation of Nature, and he wishes to impress these ideas of his upon our minds, so that we may view her as he views her. He does not place in our hands a mere auctioneer's catalogue of the precious things in Nature, to which he would have us turn our attention. No; for then, gazing with lack-lustre eye, we should gain nothing beyond vague *sensations* from what we see; since, as Dr. Whewell has taught us, 'in every act of perception or knowledge, there must be the subjective idea to give form to the objective sensations.' Without ideas, we should see no more than Wordsworth's Peter Bell saw:—

> 'In vain, through every changeful year,
> Did Nature lead him as before;
> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more.'

Cowper makes it his aim to supply to us the ideas, with which we may inform our sensations from natural objects. We are conscious, as we read, that he is ever at our side, explaining to us what *he* sees in the landscape on which we are looking together; projecting himself into the scene, and rendering the spots that we have visited in his company so many memorials of him; inasmuch as it was he who taught us to appreciate them, and beautified them to us for ever. And thus we see William Cowper in every line of his poetry. The Poet is the Man. He never writes about himself; yet himself is in all that he has written. He does not (as we have seen in some later developments of the subjective school of poetry) designedly dwell on Self as the theme of his discourse; he does not lecture on the anatomy of his being, nor give us a studied analysis of the feelings of his heart and the experiences of his life; yet his experiences, his feelings, his sympathies, his likes and dislikes, his hopes and fears, his beliefs, his notions of right and wrong, are all recorded faithfully in his verse, and make us feel that we are dealing less with a book than with a man. Cowper's poetry without Cowper would be 'the play of Hamlet with Hamlet's part omitted.'

To return from his literary to his domestic and social life. We do not often meet with a confirmed invalid, such as Cowper was, who is so free from the morbid selfishness which is apt to grow insensibly upon a man in such circumstances, however expansive his disposition by nature. Bachelor though he was, and compelled to shut himself up in strict seclusion, and to be dependent in an unusual degree upon the good offices of the few friends with whom he did consort, he yet never gave way to a habit of querulous self-seeking. He was never exacting in his demands upon others, never dissatisfied with the efforts they made in his behalf (as poor Mrs. Unwin became, when her naturally amiable disposition was warped by disease). And in his poems, it is not his diseased self that he presents to the view of his readers. If he craved for sympathy *in* his unhappiness, he asked for no sympathy *with* it. He was not one of those writers who, being wretched

themselves, seem to derive a morbid satisfaction from making others also wretched. On the contrary, Cowper's poetry is eminently distinguished by its healthiness of tone. To persons afflicted as he was, there is a temptation to appeal to the commiseration of their readers, by depicting the distressing details of their conflicts and delusions, and sometimes with a minute particularity which becomes revolting. Even so we have seen diseased paupers in our streets, who seek to extort the charity of those who pass them on the pavement, by laying bare their maimed limbs or loathsome sores to the public gaze. Cowper's native refinement made it impossible that he should for an instant entertain such an idea. The instinctive delicacy of a gentleman forbade him to make a parade of his mental agonies, or his spiritual despair. They who come to the reading of his poems without any previous knowledge of the story of his life, will certainly not discover from the perusal of them, that the Poet was, even at the moment of writing, the prey of despairing melancholy. Nor will it readily occur to their minds, that when he wrote the pathetic description of the Hypochondriac, in 'Retirement,' he was painting his own portrait. To employ an expression of his own, in allusion to his residence at St. Alban's, he 'chose to draw a veil over the secrets of his prison house.' He descanted not on his pains and miseries, but on the innocent pleasures which brought him relief from them: on the soothing charms of Nature, and the consolations of Religion, Nature and Nature's God were the source of his inspiration, and the solace of his wounded heart; and these are consequently the objects towards which he was never tired of directing the contemplations of those for whom he wrote.

But this is not the whole account of the matter. Not only did Cowper, in his serious poems, prefer treating those subjects which experience taught him had power to 'minister to a mind diseased,' to inflicting on his readers an analysis of the disease of his own mind. He also produced a number of lyrical pieces, written in the lightest and airiest style of pure playfulness. In this Selection are included many of his charming *vers de société*, a class of composition in which

Cowper stands unequalled among English poets. These have been inserted, not merely as a set-off to the graver and more didactic poems, nor simply on account of their intrinsic excellence in this kind; but because there is good reason to believe that they are the truest exponents of the real nature of the man, when not shrouded under the gloomy pall of his malady, nor held in check by the repressive action of his theological system.

No just or complete estimate of Cowper's natural character and disposition can be formed by those who study only his serious productions, to the neglect of these delightful outbreaks of genuine fun and frolic. In them we see evidence of his possessing by nature that thoroughly genial spirit which (as was before remarked) is an ingredient essential to the making of a thorough gentleman. Could we but roll aside the mirky cloud which too often obscured the brightness of Cowper's mind, we should discover behind it a radiant sunshine, quite in keeping with the cheerfulness of Nature; a disposition as blithe as the bees, and as sportive as the lambs about him. When he was quite himself, he would carol in sheer buoyancy of heart; indulging himself in what he described to Mr. Newton as 'bagatelles, that sometimes sprang up like mushrooms in his imagination,' and in which the exuberant glee and graceful *abandon* of a child at play, are found in alliance with the power and delicacy of taste which belong to the practised man of letters. Nor are these effusions to be regarded as exceptional or reactionary in their character. On the contrary, it is plain that they are the most genuine and natural of all Cowper's productions. It takes but a single glance to discriminate between the genial humour which wells up irrepressibly from the deep fountain within, and the funny writing which has been elaborately concocted, not for the purpose of affording relief to the writer, but with the design of forcing a laugh from the reader. These 'bagatelles' of Cowper's are not only invariably free from the oblique impieties and impurities, on which the dreary people called comic writers depend almost exclusively for making their points; but they are never dis-

figured by the false humour, or the artificial brilliancy, which enable us to detect the man who is straining after a frame of mind that is not congenial with his real nature. It is clear that these sportive effusions are to be taken as the gauge and index of the natural disposition, which would have been habitual to Cowper, had not his health and his theology combined to repress its display. There were times when he was conscious that effort was required to check in himself a gaiety of tone which he had been taught to condemn as unbefitting his Christian profession. 'Alas!' he wrote to Unwin, 'what can I do with my wit? . . . I must do with it as I do with my linnet—keep him for the most part in a cage, but now and then set open the door that he may whisk about the room a little, and then shut him up again.' A cardinal point in the school of theology in which Cowper graduated, was the absolute and inherent antagonism of Nature and Grace; and he fell into the error of imagining, that if he would be secure in a state of grace, he must set himself deliberately to stamp out his nature, as irretrievably corrupt in its every development. And thus he was led to think, that because he found in himself a natural taste for happiness and external cheerfulness, it therefore behoved him to suppress this taste, and make himself unhappy. After all, Cowper was never fully emancipated into 'the glorious liberty'—the sense of unfettered personal freedom, into which the simple reception of the Gospel in all its fulness introduces us. He had learned indeed to regard God as a Being whose wrath against himself had been appeased: he had scarcely risen from this to the higher conception of Him, as One whose very name is Love. He had grasped the particular, but could not reach the universal, which explains and gives its meaning to the particular: and what wonder if, missing this, he could with difficulty retain his hold upon that? To him Christ appeared rather as the averter of God's vengeance, than as the exponent of His love. Hence arose that feeling of constraint and diffidence in his personal relations with God, which must ever beset those who think of Him less as the reconciler than the reconciled; as pacified, but not benignant. If he could but

have known one God instead of two, and that one as his Father indeed; if he could but have entered into the full import of his Saviour's words, 'I and my Father are One,' then at length he would have gained the calm repose of

'The soul emancipated, unoppressed.'

Then would his own beautiful words have become practically true to himself:

'The free-born Christian has no chains to prove,
Or if a chain, the golden one of love;
Thought, word and deed his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.'

But so long as he could entertain dark thoughts of God's 'resentment of His injured laws'; so long as in his secret soul he could regard the work of the Son who came to manifest the eternal love of a Father, as that which

'wins deliverance, and suspends
The stroke that a vindictive God intends,'

so long must he remain a stranger to the true spirit of filial confidence, which

'makes us, if at all, *completely* free.'

Nay, the doubt will arise, whether those whose reception of the Good News is thus partial and one-sided, can at any time feel certain that the wrath of their 'vindictive God' is actually appeased, except for the moment. With their system of theology, they can (at the most) regard God only as appeasable by fresh sprinklings of the blood of Christ; not as having been once for all appeased. They think of Christ as one who came to set aside and alter the Father's purposes towards mankind; not as one who in His life and death was declaring and carrying out those purposes. They have failed to seize the sublime truth, that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' This imperfect apprehension of the fatherly character of God produced in Cowper a timorous misgiving lest he should give renewed offence, were he to allow scope to any of his natural inclinations, however innocent they might be. The truest aspect of the Poet's mind was the genial, not the gloomy one; but he imagined,

that just because he was disposed to be cheerful, he ought not to be so. Thinking this, and in proportion as he was under the immediate influence of those who led him to think this, he would too often work himself into an artificial strain of seriousness (artificial, though not fictitious), in which he became for the time unnatural, and sometimes unjust to himself and others. His solemn and serious mood was, as it were, 'a wet blanket put on for penance. Had Cowper been a Roman Catholic he would have been a Trappist, or a Flagellant; and he has a kind of gloomy pleasure in administering to himself—not a physical, but a moral flagellation, as a sort of atonement for those occasional lapses into cheerfulness to which by nature he was inclined[1].'

But though in all this Cowper was undoubtedly unnatural, yet he was not unreal. On the contrary, it was the real Self within him that was consciously struggling against his nature. Nature and Sin were, in his theology, so inextricably conjoined, that it was only by the slaying of nature that sin could be destroyed. And it is very real work indeed, terribly real, to be acting on a conviction of this kind. All honour to the man who, holding such a belief (however erroneously), pains himself to make it a practical, and not a merely nominal belief! But we must not shut our eyes to the inevitable result; namely, that much of the later life of Cowper, though it may not in fairness be called unreal, was certainly unnatural; and that some of the moods in which he indulged most habitually, though never fictitious or assumed hypocritically, were artificially superinduced, from a mistaken notion of duty. And our present inquiry is, what was the native disposition of the Poet, before he took up with this system of self-repression, as a religious obligation? We see it in the hilarity of the schoolboy, enjoying life to the finger-tips, and 'acquiring fame by his achievements' at foot-ball, and in the cricket-field. We recognise it in the light-hearted gaiety of the young man, spending his days in 'giggling and making giggle' with

[1] The editor is indebted for the words above quoted, as well as for other valuable thoughts embodied in this paragraph, to his old friend and tutor, the General Editor of this Series of English Classics.

those charming cousins of his in Southampton Row. We trace it in the genial, and perhaps somewhat roystering merriment of the Templar, holding his own with the most brilliant wits in London at the 'Nonsense Club.' And we mark it still, when sickness had done its worst, and religion had done its best for him, in the sunny cheerfulness and the unalloyed enjoyment of those fifteen months at Huntingdon, amidst the delightful Unwin circle. The religion, pure and simple, of those early days of faith, robbed him not of one tittle of his native cheerfulness. The change came, when he had passed out of the bright sunshine of religion, into the gloomy atmosphere of religious *system*:—a system of spiritual introspection; a system of frames and feelings; a self-hating and nature-loathing system. And thenceforward Cowper set himself, with varying success, to become an adept in this system, and to fight Nature at every point. He could not always manage it, though he tried hard; but he seems to have been always equal to the occasion, when addressing his master and spiritual director. If you want to distinguish the genuine man from the man of system, read Cowper's letters to Unwin,—always cheerful, often humorous, and sometimes even jovial; and then contrast them with those written to Mr. Newton. You will find that in the latter the Poet has always wound himself up into his most serious mood; and writes in the constrained style of one who feels himself compelled to weigh each sentence carefully, lest in an unguarded moment he should commit himself, by unintentionally overstepping the line of conventional propriety. The same distinction comes out in the fact that he was in the constant habit of sending to his friend Unwin all his gay poetical 'trifles,' whilst reserving for Mr. Newton's eye the pieces written in a graver tone. And why? Because he regarded the latter as 'already an apostle.' This he tells Mr. Newton himself, in explanation of the fact to which we have just now adverted. Indeed we can scarcely forbear smiling at the *naiveté* with which he tells his correspondent, 'When my Muse comes forth arrayed in sables, or at least in a robe of graver cast, I make no scruple to direct her to my friend at

Hoxton' (whither Mr. Newton had removed on quitting Olney). Yet even in this letter he cannot avoid the humorous tone, in which he further accounts for his motives. 'If,' he writes, 'I walked the streets with a fiddle under my arm, I should never think of performing before the window of a Privy Councillor, or a Chief Justice, but should rather make free with ears more likely to be open to such amusement.' It is clear that Cowper held Mr. Newton in much awe, and kept his natural cheerfulness of disposition strictly in check in intercourse with him. But it is not less clear that his natural disposition, when unaffected by disease, and not systematically repressed in accordance with his theory of religion, was cheerful and genial.

It is true, that during the periods when he was under the power of his mental malady, Cowper exhibited a settled aversion to society, and was sunk in a depth of despondency which was only not morose, because he was careful to withdraw himself from circumstances in which his private misery must have affected others beside himself. But we are not justified in drawing from these facts a conclusion adverse to that which other considerations have led us to adopt. It is not fair or reasonable to base our judgment of a man's character upon what we see of him at times when he is confessedly not himself. The phenomena attendant on mental disease are not only varied, but diverse. In some instances, indeed, it would seem as if the temporary loss of reason served only to bring out into exaggerated prominence what was the original temper and disposition; and to display in a painfully glaring light the propensities which were always the strongest in the sufferer, but which the power of reason had hitherto enabled him to hold in check. But it happens not unfrequently, that the opposite effect is produced; and then the nature of the man, so far from asserting itself in a truer (though an exaggerated) form, undergoes disruption, distortion, and in many cases a complete reversal. We all know that one of the earliest and surest symptoms of insanity is, that a man takes a sudden and unaccountable dislike to those objects, persons, and habits of life, which before had been the

source of his greatest pleasure. When an affectionate husband and father cannot bear the sight of his wife and children, and even seeks to rid himself by violent means of a presence which has become hateful to him, what is the conclusion to which our observation of this change leads us? Not, surely, that he has been all along cherishing a secret dislike to them, which he has been artfully concealing under insincere professions of love; but, that there is an absolute reversal of his real nature, resulting from disease. We describe his state as an 'alienation' of mind; for it has become 'somebody else's mind,' and is his own no longer. In like manner, if we find Cowper during the suspension of his faculties plunged in despair, moody and taciturn, and refusing all participation in the amenities of social life, are we to regard these conditions as so many indications of what he really was by nature? Shall we not rather say, as he said himself,

> 'That tongue is silent now:—that silent tongue
> Could argue once, could jest, or join the song,
> Could give advice, could censure or commend,
> Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.'

Nay more: it is the lesson of experience, that persons whose general temper is gay and lively, and who diffuse their sprightliness through the society in which they move, are far more liable to occasional depression of spirits, than others who are of a more sedate and equable turn. Those who are foremost to 'jest or join the song' to-day, are sometimes found moping in solitary dulness on the morrow. The reaction produces a more sensible effect upon their spirits, from the very keenness of the relish with which they had enjoyed their previous gaiety. Such persons are in a peculiar degree dependent for the maintenance of their hilarity upon external circumstances; upon company, good health, and favourable atmospheric conditions. How much Cowper's spirits were affected for good or for ill by the changes of the weather, we learn from many passages in his Letters. For instance, when Lady Hesketh asked him at what time of the year he would prefer a visit from her at Weston, he replied: 'The depth of the winter is the season which would be most eligible

to me. For then it is that in general I have most need of a cordial, particularly in the month of January.' And thus he wrote to Unwin, in July 1782: 'I give you joy of the happy change in the season, and myself also. I fill four sides in less time than two would have cost me a week ago; such is the effect of sunshine upon such a butterfly as I am.' Never was a child of Nature more keenly susceptible to all the sweet and soothing influences of the great Mother: and if she threw, or seemed to throw, a veil across her face, that shut in from his wistful gaze her life-sustaining smile, the chill struck to his heart, and he was sad. And silent too: for he could never sing but when his listening soul caught the eternal harmonies of Nature's heavenly strains; and then his spirits rose with joyous sympathy to swell in tuneful unison the chorus of the skies. We have his poems before us. Let us judge them on their merits, and form our estimate of their author's character from what we read in them. Let us rid our minds of preconceived and traditionary notions respecting him,—whether of his effeminate softness as a man, or of his harsh bigotry and gloomy fanaticism as a theologian. And thus, if we except 'The Castaway,' which belongs to that closing scene of his life, in which the cloud had settled permanently upon his soul, we shall discover in all his poems the sterling sense of a strong-minded Man, combined with the dignified geniality of a courteous and high-bred Gentleman.

§ iii. *Cowper was an Englishman.* We meet with men every day of our lives, who, but for the accident of their having been born in Hertfordshire or some other English county, might just as well be Americans, or Germans, or Frenchmen, for anything distinctive that they have in their character, their habits, or their theory of life. They are Englishmen negatively, as not being natives of any other country; not positively, as exhibiting any marked peculiarities by which they may be recognised as such. On the contrary, Cowper was English to the core. He bore upon him the stamp of his nationality. No matter in what part of the globe he might be found, he would at once have been known for an Englishman. He could not easily have been mistaken even

for a Scotsman or an Irishman, much less for an American, or a foreigner. He possessed many of the strongly marked virtues, as well as some of the failings and prejudices, which go to form the popular conception of a thoroughbred Englishman.

Perhaps the remark may be allowed—if it be not thought to savour somewhat too rankly of our insular self-esteem—that in showing Cowper to have been emphatically a Man, we have gone far towards proving that he was thoroughly English. Masculine force, freedom from affectation, singleness of purpose, directness in the adaptation of means to ends, straightforwardness of expression, and simplicity of diction,—in whom shall we find these qualities combined, if not in the typical John Bull?

In addition to all these well-known attributes of the Englishman, Cowper shared the national distaste for speculative philosophy, or metaphysical subtilties of thought. He never travelled far from the beaten road of downright matter-of-fact. We have made it our national boast, that we are an 'eminently practical' people; and Cowper, though a poet, was the most practical of men. With that impatience of anything like doubt or uncertainty, which is commonly to be observed in men of this character, he liked to have all matters of faith set before him in a definite and tangible shape; he formed his opinions strongly, and adhered to them with extreme tenacity. In his statements of them to others, he was at once explicit and uncompromising, for he knew what he meant and was not ashamed of his beliefs; but he was also positive and dogmatic, for as he entertained no doubts himself, so he admitted none on the part of others. When once his mind was made up on a point, he regarded it as no longer a question open to discussion; and neither offered argument in support of his own opinion, nor could listen without irritation to arguments which others might bring against it. He waved all such objectors aside, with the imperious and slightly contemptuous exclamation, that

> 'Truth, proposed to reasoners such as they,
> Is a pearl cast—completely cast away!'

He seems to tell us, 'It is so: and if you do not see it to

be so, you are perversely blind;—if you do not agree with me, you ought, that's all I can say.' And this he does say, sometimes, in such a tone of defiance as serves to remind us, that if John Bull is positive in his opinions, he is also notoriously disposed to be pugnacious in defence of them. Our poet occasionally appears to assume a hostile attitude towards those whose creed differs from his own, which is little calculated either to conciliate their feelings, or to convince their minds. In the earnestness of his conviction, he is not always so careful as he might be, to act in accordance with his own very sensible reflection, that

> 'twere pity to offend
> By useless censure, whom we cannot mend.'

Like a true Briton, again, Cowper had his prejudices, which were very dear to him, and which he was rather fond of nursing. In particular, he viewed with an eye of jealous suspicion aught that wore an air of innovation. Physical Science was a newborn thing in his day; and he looked askance at the mighty infant, with that vague alarm and ill-defined repugnance, which would fain have strangled it in its cradle, if he could have done so. Yet Nature was the mistress of his choice, on whom he lavished a love as constant as it was reverent and deep. And is not Natural Science the revealer and expounder of Nature, setting forth her glories, and disclosing her countless charms to the admiration of a world which, without such guidance, might be heedless of her marvellous beauties? If so, then the Bard of Nature should have been the last to strike the thrilling note of fear, which has not yet ceased to agitate some faint-hearted ones, whose minds are less comprehensive than devout. But the thing was new, and Cowper shrank from it with instinctive mistrust. His mind misgave him, that the discoveries of the Geologist and the Astronomer might come into conflict with Revelation, and so might place religion itself in jeopardy. He had not learned—what some have yet to learn—that through the Book of Nature, page after page of which is now being decyphered for us by the expert sons of Science, God is

revealing Himself to us as surely as by his Book of Holy Scripture. These and the Book of Providence, written in the history of nations and of individual men, are but three several volumes that come to us from one and the same Divine Author; and it is impossible that any one of them, if rightly understood, should contradict the revelation which He has given in the remaining two. The retired life led by the recluse of Olney, and (it must be added) the lack of effort on his part to keep up with the advancing knowledge of the time by reading and study, naturally had the effect of fixing and confirming these and similar prejudices. But herein he showed himself all too like the mass of his countrymen, that he was most eager to condemn those novel ideas of which he knew least, and the theories which he had never made the subject of his special study.

There is one prejudice which none of us would like to see eradicated from English soil, where it has ever flourished as a plant of indigenous growth, and from which all attempts to transplant it seem to fail:—the prejudice in favour of home and home-life. In all ages there have been two distinct ideas of what constitutes the happiness of human life. Does it consist in Pleasure, or in Peace? In nothing does the character of a man or of a nation discover itself more clearly than in the answer given to this question. Archbishop Trench has well compared the national temper of the Hebrew and the Greek by this criterion. 'The innermost distinction between the Greek mind and the Hebrew reveals itself in the several salutations of each; the 'Rejoice' [χαῖρε] of the first, the 'Peace' [*shalom*] of the second. The clear, cheerful, world-enjoying temper of the Greek embodies itself in the first; he could desire nothing better or higher for himself, and thus could not wish it for his friend, than to have joy in his life. But the Hebrew had a deeper longing within him, and one which finds utterance in his "Peace!"' This explains to us why the Hebrew race cherished the home and family life, as that which best secured to them the happiness of peace. And in this respect our own nation has had a closer affinity to the Hebrew than to the Greek mind. We have clung to the

sanctities of domestic life, because we have sought our happiness in that peace which is 'meek and constant, hating change,' rather than in pleasure:—Pleasure,

> 'That reeling goddess, with the zoneless waist
> And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
> Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support.'

In a nation of home-lovers, there were few who loved so dearly the peace and tranquillity of undisturbed home-life as Cowper did. It may be that his enjoyment of domestic bliss was so much the fuller, because for some thirty years he had not known a home. His mother died when he was six years old, and thenceforward he was all but an entire stranger to the rectory of Berkhampsted. From school he passed to London lodgings, thence to chambers in the Temple, next to a lunatic asylum, and then again to solitary apartments in Huntingdon; and it was not till the close of 1765 that he found a home in the Unwin family. Through all his life he was without the solace of a sister's love; he never knew the soft endearments of connubial tenderness; of his father he saw next to nothing from the moment of his mother's death; and his only brother, born in the hour of that direst loss, pursued a path divergent from his own till both were grown to manhood. And all this time the Poet's yearning heart cherished the Englishman's darling hope of settling down sooner or later, in the repose of domestic life. He gained that rest at last; and he never ceased to prize what he had so hardly won. His poetry is redolent of Home. How inimitable are his pictures of still life within doors, in that exquisite poem 'The Winter Evening.' We can see what a labour of love it was to him to paint them; how every fresh touch that he added, every bit of colour that he laid on, brought him a new thrill of pleasurable emotion. For in 'the calm of truth-tried love' he did indeed 'find joys,' such as Pleasure's 'stormy raptures' never yield to her votaries, amid the exciting whirl of fashionable dissipation. That was no mere poetical rhapsody, but a genuine outpouring from the fount of feeling within, when he exclaimed,

'Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the Fall!
Thou art the nurse of Virtue. In thine arms
She smiles, appearing as in truth she is,
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.'

Akin to this loving appreciation of quiet domestic joys was Cowper's devotion to rural scenes and rural occupations. This too may be regarded as an essentially English taste. We shall not readily find another nation, whose children are so little dependent on external excitement for their happiness. Even those of us whose lot is cast in crowded cities, where they are surrounded by all the appliances of artificial amusement, flee with avidity to the sequestered nooks of some suburban village, to find in strolling through its shady lanes and green fields their highest enjoyment. To point out the influence of rural associations upon the poetry of Cowper, would be to transcribe The Task, and the greater part of all else that he wrote.

A feeling of Patriotism is, thank God! not confined to this country. It is a seed implanted in human nature, as such; and in every age and clime it has produced rich and beautiful fruits. And in Cowper's breast the patriotic fire glowed as something more than a sentiment; it was a deep and burning passion. He loved his native land with a fervour which made it 'praise and boast enough' for him, that he was born her child. And that love was all the more pathetic, from the agony of humiliation on her account with which he mourned over her follies and her sins. His great soul heaved with no feigned emotion, as he burst into the passionate cry,

'England, with all thy faults I love thee still,—
My country! and while yet a nook is left,
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee.'

The land that gave him birth had taken the place in his affections which was once filled by the mother who bore him. Her happiness and welfare were his own; her triumphs were his triumphs; her enemies were enemies to him; her life was his life. If ever he regretted the private lot which his circum-

stances, equally with his tastes, had marked out for him, it was perhaps when he would fain have been up and stirring in his country's cause, and lending his active aid by voice and hand in her defence. In such an hour he sang,

> 'To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
> Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
> Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
> But I can feel thy fortunes and partake
> Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
> As any thunderer there.'

It is possible that Cowper may have even shared his countrymen's unreasonable dislike to foreigners, simply because they are foreigners. If we detect in his writings indications of this feeling, we must take into account two circumstances, which were very likely to contribute towards it. In the first place, Cowper was buried in a remote country village, where he had only two or three associates: and men who are thus cut off from a more extended intercourse with their kind, are nearly sure to indulge in extravagant admiration of that with which they are familiar, while they suffer themselves to imbibe prejudices against those who are outside of their own restricted circle. This remark is equally applicable to the theological denunciations, the sweeping character of which not seldom pains us as we read. Had Cowper known more of other sets and classes, beside that to which he himself belonged, he would not have fallen into the censorious tone of thought and expression which at present forms the greatest blot upon his pages. If we would learn how many points of agreement there are between ourselves and others from whom we differ, whether in respect of national, political, or theological distinctions, we have only to cultivate relations of frequent intercourse with them. Hereby we shall discover, to our amazement, that our sympathies are more numerous and important than our antipathies; and even when the difference remains as before, we shall be compelled to admit how 'much may be said on both sides.' But further. Not only was Cowper an isolated recluse in an obscure retreat of an Island, which itself appears, as we view

it on the map, to be completely dissevered from the rest of Europe; but at the time when he lived and wrote, England was (as we shall presently see) in a state of actual warfare with nearly every great European power, as well as with her American Colonies. It was not till after the war was brought to an end, and the various ports were consequently thrown open, that the Continent became generally known to Englishmen; and from that time a better acquaintance with foreigners has produced its natural effect of softening the animosities, which all good patriots had been wont to think it a duty to their country to maintain. There was everything, therefore, both in Cowper's private manner of life, and in the hostile relations in which this country stood towards the belligerent powers abroad, to make his patriotism run into the distorted form of indiscriminate antipathy to whatever was not English.

However this might be, it is certain that Cowper proved himself, in all his writings, to be a true scion of that stock, which 'Freedom claimed for her firstborn son.' Not that we would point to the passion for Liberty as a virtue attaching in any exclusive sense to our national character. Our Poet himself has reminded us that this, like Patriotism, is a principle of natural, and not of local growth in the human heart.

> 'Nature imprints upon whate'er we see
> That has a heart and life in it,—Be free!'

Yet when we hear him sing of

> 'A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains,'

we are not disposed to challenge his right to claim for our own land specifically a sentiment which, though common to humanity at large, has ever asserted itself as the strongest and most practical of all our British instincts. In all periods of our history we have jealously guarded our liberty as the life of our life, the very charter of our existence as a nation. We have prized it, not as one amongst other goods that we would not willingly be without, but as that which includes, and is essential to the being of, all else that we esteem as good. To us,

'Religion, Virtue, Truth, whate'er we call
A blessing—Freedom is the pledge of all.'

Cowper indeed has given us no single poem on Liberty, as Thomson did; but it was his pride to consecrate his powers to the promotion of this,

'The noblest cause mankind can have at stake.'

He was never a keen politician; but was always (as he wrote to Lady Hesketh in 1790) 'an old Whig, as his father was before him; and an enemy consequently to all tyrannical impositions.' He was fond of tracing his poetical inspiration itself to the political principles instilled into him by early training. Thus he wrote to Mr. Newton in 1781: 'I learned when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig and a man that loved his country, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry, or at least to prompt a person, if he has any inclination that way, to poetical endeavours.' And so it was brought about, that Liberty became

'The Poet's Muse, his passion, and his theme.'

We are not to imagine, however, that he had adopted political theories like those avowed by the men who have in later times been known as 'Radical Reformers,' or 'Advanced Liberals.' He was simply one of the old-fashioned, moderate, Constitutional Whigs: and he did not like to have it supposed that his principles were of a democratic tendency. Writing to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, May 7, 1793[1], he insists as follows: 'There is no TRUE Whig who wishes to have all power in the hands of his own party. The division of it which the lawyers call tripartite is exactly what we desire; and we would have neither Kings, Lords, nor Commons unequally trusted, or in the smallest degree predominant. Such a Whig am I, and such Whigs are the true friends of the Constitution.' Nay, strange as it may seem to us who have read Carlyle, the Poet held the memory of Oliver Cromwell in as much abhorrence as the staunchest Tory of bygone generations; and he entertained an unaccountable prejudice

[1] This date is misprinted '1783' in S. iv. 314.

against Burke in his own day. Nor had he the slightest sympathy with the French Revolution, to which many English Liberals were disposed to look with hopeful interest. To his friend Walter Bagot he wrote: 'Though you are Tory, I believe, and I am Whig, our sentiments concerning the madcaps of France are much the same. They are a terrible race, and I have a horror both of them and their principles.' The date of this letter, March 4, 1793, was before the excesses of the 'Reign of Terror' opened the eyes of those in England who had begun by sympathizing with the revolutionary party in France.

They were stirring times in which Cowper lived. He wanted but eighteen months of the threescore years and ten of a man's life; and during those years he saw some of the most remarkable events of Modern History. He saw the final establishment of the Hanoverian Succession, by the failure of the last of the efforts made to restore the exiled House of Stuart. He saw the vast wave of war that deluged the whole of the European Continent, but above which his own beloved country rode with majestic steadiness, until—not wrecked, but with her timbers sorely strained—she floated securely into the harbour of peace. He saw the disruption of the Empire by the defection of her American Colonies; and the birth of the mighty Republic of the United States, on their triumphant assertion of their Independence of the mother-country. He saw this loss compensated in some measure by the development and consolidation of the British Empire in India, from the nucleus formed by the trade-settlements of a private commercial Company. And he saw the rise and progress of the French Revolution, with all its unparalleled horrors; and lived long enough to see the appointment of Napoleon Buonaparte as First Consul. We must take a rapid survey of such contemporary events as are referred to in the poems of our Author.

Cowper was fourteen years old, when

> 'the Stuart, leaning on the Scot,
> Pierced to the very centre of the realm,
> And hoped to seize its abdicated helm.'

And it may be surmised that the Westminster schoolboy, living at the time, felt as eager an interest in what he heard of the romantic and dashing young Chevalier, as that with which the schoolboy of the present day reads the story of 'the '45' as narrated by Sir Walter Scott. How 'the Young Pretender,' Charles Edward, after an abortive attempt to land at Dungeness with a French force in 1744, appeared on the western coast of Scotland in July, 1745; how he began his march on Aug. 20, made his public entry into Perth on Sept. 3, and there proclaimed his father as King James VIII; secured Holyrood House on Sept. 17, and defeated Sir John Cope at Preston-pans on Sept. 21; how on Nov. 1 he set out from Edinburgh for London, and made his way through Carlisle, Lancaster, Preston, and Manchester to Derby, regardless of two English armies, under Marshal Wade and the Duke of Cumberland respectively; how, though he made good his retreat thence to Stirling, having beaten the King's forces again at Falkirk on Jan. 17, he was finally crushed by the decisive battle of Culloden, April 16, 1746; and how, after wandering about Scotland for five months, he escaped at last to France, Sept. 20, 1746;—all this is known to every reader of 'Waverley.' By the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in Oct. 1748, the French Court undertook to expel the Chevalier from France. After an imprisonment at Vincennes, he was conveyed to the borders of Savoy in 1766; whence he returned to Rome, and died in 1788.

Cowper's favourite British hero was Wolfe. Wolfe was his military, as Pitt was his political 'sun'; and he thought it praise enough

> 'To fill the ambition of a private man,
> That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
> And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.'

James Wolfe, born at Westerham in 1726, entered the army at the age of fourteen. During the war of the Austrian Succession, he was present at the battles of Dettingen, in 1743; of Fontenoy, in 1745; and of Leuffeld, in 1746; at the last of which he attracted the personal notice and thanks of the Duke of Cumberland: and at the age of twenty-two he was already a

lieutenant-colonel. Pitt had a talent for discovering and advancing merit, independent of seniority or of social and political connexions; and in the plain, ungainly, red-haired, shy, and sickly youth, he discerned one who,

> 'Where'er he fought,
> Put so much of his heart into his act,
> That his example had a magnet's force,
> And all were swift to follow whom all loved.'

Accordingly, in 1758 (when Cowper was residing in the Temple) Wolfe was sent out to North America, as second in command under Amherst, with the rank of brigadier-general; when he greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Louisburg, the capital of Cape Breton, which was taken July 27. In 1759 he was appointed to the chief command in Canada. He landed at the Isle of Orleans, in front of Quebec, on June 27; made a gallant but ineffectual attempt to force the French lines in their entrenchments at the mouth of the Montmorency, on the 31st of July; and finally landed his troops beneath the Heights of Abraham, at a place still known as 'Wolfe's Cove.' During the transport he recited to his brother-officers Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard; and concluded by saying, 'Now, gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem, than take Quebec.' By the single path which led upwards, and which was in some places so narrow as not to admit of two men marching abreast, he scaled the precipice; the French guards, struck with panic, fled before him; and at daybreak on Sept. 13, the whole of the British army was standing on the summit of the Heights in battle array, with their single piece of artillery dragged up after them by main force. The French general, the Marquis de Montcalm, though taken by surprise, met Wolfe with a courage and strategic skill not inferior to his own. A ball struck Wolfe in the arm,—he wrapped his handkerchief round it, and went on fighting; another ball hit him in the groin, but he would not leave the field; a third pierced his breast, and he was at length conveyed to the rear. There, just as his eyes were closing, an officer near him exclaimed, 'See how they run!' 'Who run?' asked the dying man. 'The enemy,'

was the reply. 'Then God be praised! I shall die happy.' And so, at the age of thirty-three, fell Wolfe 'on his field of glory,'—

'upon the lap
Of smiling Victory, that moment won.'

Montcalm too received his death-wound in the action, but lingered till the next day. On Sept. 18 the capitulation of Quebec was signed; and thus was Canada secured to the British Crown.

During the first fifty years of Cowper's life, England was almost continually at war with France, or Spain, or both together; and at one time she had the whole European world arrayed against her. On Oct. 19, 1739, when the boy was in his eighth year, war was declared against Spain, in consequence of the severity with which that nation enforced her right of search for contraband goods, on our merchant vessels sailing in the seas of her South American colonies. In this year Admiral Vernon attacked Portobello, which was then the great mart for the rich commerce of Peru and Chili, and took it on Nov. 21; and in 1740, repeated, but finally unsuccessful attempts were made on Carthagena, in Columbia. The death of the Emperor Charles VI, on Oct. 20, 1740, led to the War of the Austrian Succession, already alluded to. The Pragmatic Sanction of 1713, to which England had been a party, had guaranteed the succession to the Emperor's Austrian dominions to his daughter Maria Theresa; but a counter claim was set up by the Elector of Bavaria. He was supported by France and, as a natural consequence, by the Bourbon King of Spain. England voted a subsidy to Maria Theresa, and thus became involved in hostilities. On June 16, 1743, the victory of Dettingen was gained by George II in person; and this was the last occasion on which an English sovereign has appeared on the field. War was formally declared in Great Britain against France, March 31, 1744. In the battle of Fontenoy, April 30, 1745, the Duke of Cumberland effected a retreat, which Count Saxe himself pronounced to be as glorious as any victory. This war closed with the Treaty

signed at Aix-la-Chapelle, on Oct. 7, 1748, between Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany, Spain, and Sardinia. But this suspension of hostilities with France was confined to the operations in Europe, and did not extend to those in the East and West Indies. Disputes had arisen respecting the limits of Nova Scotia, which had been assigned to England by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, and confirmed at Aix. Great Britain also objected to the erection of a chain of forts by the French along the Ohio, with the purpose of uniting their State of Louisiana with Canada; as also to the French occupation of certain of the West India Isles, which had been left neutral by former agreements. War was again adjudged, May 18, 1756. Minorca, which had been ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht, was captured by the combined fleets of France and Spain, June 28; a loss which so incensed the nation, that Admiral Byng was shot for an error of judgment in declining an engagement with the enemy. But the war was soon after entrusted to the management of Pitt; when a series of brilliant victories ensued, until the taking of Quebec in 1759, followed by the fall of Montreal in the next year, made Canada a British possession.

Meanwhile the jealousies between Austria and Prussia had given rise to the Seven Years' War. By a treaty dated May 1, 1756, France had formed a league with Austria for the partition of Prussia; in which Russia, Saxony and Sweden afterwards joined. Hereupon Great Britain made an alliance with Frederick the Great, in April, 1757. In this year the French invaded Hanover, and forced the Duke of Cumberland to lay down his arms, with his army of 40,000 men; and thus was Hanover for the time lost to the British Crown. But the French were beaten at Minden, Aug. 1, 1759; the Toulon squadron was defeated by Boscawen at Lagos Bay, Aug. 18; and on Nov. 20, Hawke gained a great victory over Conflans with the fleet from Brest, in Quiberon Bay. 'When the news was brought in,' writes Cowper, 'of Boscawen's success off the coast of Portugal, how did I leap for joy! When Hawke demo-

lished Conflans, I was still more transported.' George II, who had ascended the throne four years before Cowper's birth, died Oct. 25, 1760; and was succeeded by his grandson as George III. He made it his boast that he was a Briton born; and at the date of his accession this was no mean boast. Success was crowning our army in all the four quarters of the globe. Europe, Asia, Africa, and America contributed to swell the number of our triumphs. In the eloquent words of Macaulay, 'our enemies soon considered it as a settled thing that they were always to be beaten. Thus victory begot victory, till, at last, wherever the forces of the two nations met, they met with disdainful confidence on one side, and with a craven fear on the other. The wind, from whatever quarter it blew, carried to England tidings of battles won, fortresses taken, provinces added to the empire.' For Pitt was the War Minister; and as such he had made himself 'the idol of England, the terror of France, the admiration of the whole civilized world. . . . His name was mentioned with awe in every palace from Lisbon to Moscow. The House of Commons, the nation, the colonies, our allies, our enemies had their eyes fixed on him alone.' By the Family Compact, concluded Aug. 15, 1761, the princes of the Bourbon House, namely the Kings of France, Spain, and Naples, formed a league offensive and defensive, with the object of counterbalancing the power of England. War was consequently declared against Spain, Jan. 4, 1762; and England had also to support Portugal in her refusal to join the alliance. But though the war was successful at all points, the Earl of Bute, who was now in office, made overtures of peace, through the neutral Court of Sardinia. These were eagerly accepted by France; preliminaries were settled at Fontainbleau; and the peace was signed at Paris, Feb. 10, 1763; thus putting an end to the Seven Years' War.

When France and Spain espoused the cause of the American Republic, the former in 1778 and the latter in 1779, England became again involved in hostilities with those countries, as we shall presently see. The year 1780

was marked by Rodney's splendid victory over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, Jan. 16. About this time, the neutral nations deemed their commerce impeded, and their honour compromised, by the right of search on which Great Britain had insisted since the war began. In opposition to the principles of our maritime law, and to the decisions of our Admiralty Courts, they contended that a neutral flag should protect the cargoes even of a hostile state. On Feb. 26, 1780, the Empress Catherine issued to the belligerent courts a proclamation, asserting that 'free ships make free goods'; and that blockades, to be acknowledged, must be stringent and effective. This formed the basis of the 'Armed Neutrality'; an alliance between Russia, Sweden and Denmark, to which Holland and Prussia, and finally Spain and France acceded; and designed to maintain the rights of neutrals, if necessary, by force of arms. Thus were all the powers of Europe ranged in a posture of antagonism, either active or passive, against Britain.

'The standards of all nations were unfurled;
She had one foe, and that one foe the world.'

Well might the Poet exclaim,

'Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear;
The nations hunt; all mark thee for a prey;
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay.'

For though 'a world was up in arms,' yet England

'Endured the brunt, and dared defy them all;'

till even Catherine herself confessed that her Armed Neutrality had proved itself an 'Armed Nullity.' But the protracted struggle in Europe and America caused a strain upon the resources of the country, too severe for her to endure long. The time arrived, when our story became one of 'conquests wrested from us, our enemies hastening to take vengeance for past humiliation, our flag scarcely able to maintain itself in our own seas.' It is true that Rodney won a great victory over Count de Grasse in the West Indies, April 12, 1782; and that Gibraltar was preserved to us by the gallant defence of General Elliott, with repeated

relief from Admirals Darby and Howe, during a siege which lasted from July, 1779, till the last day of the war. But cessation from hostilities had become imperative, and the preliminaries of peace with France and Spain were signed at Versailles, Jan. 20, 1783. What Cowper thought of the matter appears in his letter to Mr. Newton, Feb. 8, 1783: 'Such another peace would ruin us, I suppose, as effectually as a war protracted to the extremest inch of our ability to bear it. I do not think it just that the French should plunder us, and be paid for doing it. We give away all that is demanded, and receive nothing but what was our own before. So far as I see it to be the effect of French knavery and British despondency, I feel it as a disgrace, and grumble at it as a wrong.' And again on Feb. 24: 'I am almost sorry to say that I am reconciled to the peace, though not upon principles of approbation, but necessity. The deplorable condition of the country convinces me, that our only refuge under Heaven was in the treaty with which I quarrelled.'

Cowper, writing in Dec. 1780, tells us of a time

> 'When Tumult lately burst his prison door,
> And set plebeian thousands in a roar;
> When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy!
> And blazing London seemed a second Troy.'

The reference is to the 'No-Popery Riots.' In May, 1778, a Bill was introduced by Sir G. Savile, for the relief of the Roman Catholics from the most galling of their civil disabilities. By an Act of William the Third, 1700, any priest found teaching or officiating was guilty of felony, if a foreigner; or of high treason, if a native of this realm. Any Roman Catholic heir who had been educated abroad forfeited his estates, which thereupon went to the next Protestant heir. A son, or other relative, being a Protestant, had power to take possession of his father's or kinsman's estates, in the lifetime of the rightful owner, if a Romanist. And all Romanists were debarred from acquiring legal property by any other means than by descent. The Relief Bill passed both Houses almost unanimously; but it produced serious popular riots in Edinburgh and Glasgow, in Jan. and Feb.

1779. Lord George Gordon, third son of Cosmo George third Duke of Gordon, was made President of the united Protestant Associations of England and Scotland. He was born in 1750, and was a godson of King George II; and had entered Parliament as Member for Luggershall in 1774. On Friday, June 2, 1780, he convened a monster meeting of Protestants in St. George's Fields. Having met in numbers variously computed at from 50,000 to 100,000, they marched to the House of Commons; all wearing the blue cockade, and carrying with them the Protestant Petition for the repeal of the obnoxious Bill, with 120,000 signatures. Arrived in Palace Yard, they assaulted the Peers entering the House, and burst into the lobby of the House of Commons, whilst Gordon, seconded by Alderman Bull, was moving that the Petition should be considered forthwith. This motion was rejected by 194 votes against eight; and the Houses adjourned till Tuesday. At night the mob set fire to the chapels of the Sardinian and Bavarian Embassies, and on Monday they destroyed other Chapels and dwelling houses, including that of Sir G. Savile. On the sixth, the House agreed to the consideration of the Petition 'as soon as the tumult should have subsided.' Yet on this evening the rioters burned down the Lord Chief Justice's house in Bloomsbury Square,—an act which elicited Cowper's lines 'On the Burning of Lord Mansfield's Library'; they set fire to Newgate, and liberated 300 prisoners from it; and then did the same to the new gaol at Clerkenwell. On Wednesday two ineffectual attempts were made to seize the Bank of England: but the King's Bench, the Marshalsea, and the Fleet were forced open, and their prisoners released; while thirty-six incendiary fires blazed at one time; the whole day being marked with outrages

'Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.'

Up to this time, the presence of the soldiery had been worse than useless. It was believed that they could not stir until the Riot Act had been read by the magistrates, at least one hour previously; and these had shewn themselves disposed to

'skulk, and put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desperate task.'

But on the night of the 7th, a proclamation was issued by the King in Council, that the military were to act without waiting for directions from the civil magistrate: the King declaring that 'there should be at all events one magistrate in the kingdom who would do his duty.' And after this, the disturbances came to an end as suddenly as they had begun. It is computed that during the four great days of these riots, not fewer than 72 private houses were destroyed, besides four or five strong gaols. Of the rioters 210 were killed in the streets, and 248 were wounded, of whom 75 died afterwards in the hospitals; whilst 21 of the ringleaders were executed after due trial. A sum of £130,000 was claimed in compensation for private losses alone; and this was raised by a rate on the various parishes concerned. Gordon himself was lodged in the Tower on a charge of high treason, but was acquitted on his trial, Feb. 5, 1781. He afterwards became a Jew; and died a prisoner for libel, Nov. 1, 1792. In a letter to Mr. Newton, June 18, 1780, Cowper has preserved a contemporary rumour, 'that this detestable plot was an egg laid in France and hatched in London, under the influence of French corruption.'

Of the historical events of his own day none had a stronger interest for Cowper than that which he persisted in stigmatizing as the 'Rebellion' of our North American Colonies. For notwithstanding his liberal politics, his patriotism would not suffer him to view their conduct as admitting of any palliation, much less of justification; and he even held that they had 'incurred the guilt of parricide' by severing themselves from the mother country. In 1764 George Grenville made the grave mistake of extending the Stamp Act to the British Colonies. This measure, which passed into law in 1765, was resented by the Americans as a species of local excise; and they indignantly denied the right of the mother country to tax her Colonies without their own consent; alleging that there should be no taxa-

tion where there was no representation, and that they were not represented in the British Parliament. The Marquess of Rockingham, who had succeeded to office in 1766, repealed the Stamp Act; but in 1767 Charles Townshend repeated the old error by his Revenues Act, which imposed upon the Colonies small taxes on British imports of tea, glass, paper, and painter's colours. This at once rekindled the flame of disaffection. Massachusetts took the lead in resistance to the impost; though the obnoxious duties were all speedily repealed, except one of 3*d. per lb.* on tea. In 1773 the men of Boston boarded the tea ships, and flung the whole cargo into the harbour. On this the despotic Lord North, now Prime Minister, took the fatal step of shutting up the port of Boston, and erecting a Royal Court of Judicature in Massachusetts, thereby infringing the charter of that State. The other States became instantly alarmed for their liberties; a 'Solemn League and Covenant' was entered into; the Congress of Philadelphia issued a 'Declaration of Rights'; and all trade with England was suspended till they should get their grievances redressed. Hereupon the provincials were proclaimed as rebels. The first battle was fought on April 19, 1775; when General Gage, the Governor of Boston, destroyed the American stores at Lexington. On June 15, 1775, George Washington was elected Commander-in-Chief of all the American forces: but he was not in time to take part in the battle which came off on the 17th, at Bunker's Hill near Boston: when both sides claimed the victory as their own. Even now, the States generally had no desire to take up arms; and on July 8, Congress signed a petition to the King, in which they avowed their loyalty to his person and their desire for reconciliation. To this the King vouchsafed no reply, regarding Congress as a self-constituted assembly, which it would not become him to recognise. This rejection of their 'olive branch' rendered the breach irreparable. It led to the famous Declaration of Independence; which was written by Jefferson, revised by Adams and Franklin, and signed by Congress, July 4, 1776. By it the thirteen American

provinces renounced allegiance to the British Crown, and declared themselves to be 'free and independent States.' This was the signal for war in earnest on both sides. It was carried on with varying success, till General Burgoyne, commanding the main body of the British force,—finding himself hemmed in by the enemy under General Gates, his troops exhausted by fatigue and scarcity of food, and with little more than 3500 fighting men left to oppose a force of 13,000—was forced to lay down his arms and surrender his whole army. This, which is known as the Convention of Saratoga (a town in the State of New York), took place on October 17, 1777, and was the turning-point of the war. A success like this was just what was wanted to decide the French Court to recognise the Independence of the States. Treaties of alliance and commerce were signed Feb. 6, 1778; and war was thus declared between France and England. Lord North now put out a formal renunciation of the right of this country to tax her Colonies, which received the Royal assent, March 11, 1778. But it was too late; and in July the French fleet, under Count D'Estaing, appeared off Rhode Island. The Spanish Court followed this example in 1779; and on December 20, 1780, war was declared against the Dutch, because it appeared from some intercepted documents, that Holland was on the point of allying herself with the States. The cause of Britain was now virtually lost; though there were occasional successes which served to revive the sinking hopes of those at home. Thus, on hearing of the surrender of Charlestown (May 12, 1780), Cowper wrote to Mr. Newton: 'This event, if my political spectacles do not deceive me, is likely to bring the rebellion to a speedy end. The Spaniards were sick of the war at the very commencement of it; and I hope that by this time the French themselves begin to find themselves a little indisposed, if not desirous of peace, which that restless and meddling temper of theirs is incapable of desiring for its own sake.' But soon he had to confess that his political spectacles could not be trusted; and in December, 1781, we find him suppressing two poetical pieces—one, a Present to the Queen of France;

the other addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds—in which he had ventured 'to prophesy an illustrious consummation of the war.' This was after the surrender of Cornwallis at York Town, with an army of 7000 men, to Washington, October 19, 1781: which was the virtual, though not the actual close of the war. On February 27, 1782, General Conway carried a resolution against all further attempts to reduce the insurgent Colonies, together with an address to the King, informing him that any who should advise the continuance of the war would be regarded as foes to their king and country. On March 15, North resigned, after twelve years' tenure of office. Rockingham, who succeeded him, at once addressed himself to pacific measures; and on his death, the Earl of Shelburne pursued the same policy. The Peace with America was signed at Paris, Nov. 30, 1782; and by it the Independence of the States was acknowledged. It was early in June, 1785, that John Adams, the first Minister of the United States, had his audience of George III. 'The King was much affected,' writes Mr. Adams, 'and I confess I was not less so.' There was royal dignity and manly simplicity in King George's greeting:—'Sir, I will be very frank with you. I was the last to consent to the separation; but the separation having been made, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an Independent Power.'

Cowper was strongly possessed with the belief that our military and naval commanders in this war did not put forth their best energies to assert the honour of the country; and to this opinion he has given frequent and forcible expression in his poems. Thus he speaks of

> 'Admirals, extolled for standing still,
> Or doing nothing with a deal of skill;
> Generals, who will not conquer when they may,
> Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay.'

In this sentiment, which was shared by many at the time, he was probably mistaken; and in the last of the lines quoted, he was unquestionably unjust. Still less was he justified in

extending his censures to the bulk of the army, as when he asked,

> 'Have our troops awaked?
> Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
> Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?'

Yet it is certain that there was a lack of vigour in the prosecution of the war: and perhaps there was enough to paralyse the head and hand of the British soldier, in the thought that he was fighting against his own flesh and blood, speaking the same tongue, sprung from the same parent stock. Two months after the Declaration of Independence, General Howe took New York (in Sept. 1776); but was remiss in following up his advantage. When the Americans retired across the Delaware, into Pennsylvania, he forbade Cornwallis to pursue them, and ordered him to disperse his troops in winter quarters. The consequence was, that Washington recrossed the Delaware, and recovered nearly the whole of the Jerseys. Had Sir H. Clinton been more expeditious in going up the Hudson, to effect a junction with Burgoyne, the result would probably have been the defeat of General Gates, instead of the Convention of Saratoga. And again, had Clinton come to the aid of Cornwallis, against whom he cherished a private grudge, the capitulation at York Town might have been prevented. When Burgoyne returned to England, the King refused to admit him to his presence; and at the same time evaded his demand for a court-martial, or a commission of inquiry. In December, 1778, both he and Howe appealed to Parliament in vindication of their conduct, complaining that the Government at home had disregarded their recommendations, had imposed restrictions on their exertions, and had neglected to supply them with instructions. Lord Stanhope's judgment on the whole matter is probably correct. 'It was the bane of England,' he writes, 'to have for chiefs men brave indeed and honourable, skilled in the details of the service, and zealous for Old England and King George, but in genius fitted only for a second place, not gifted by nature with that energy and firmness essential to a chief command.

There was wanting in the Cabinet that energy which enables a Prime Minister to discard the rules of seniority in the selection of a General. 'There was wanting in short a master mind like Chatham's, to discover and call forth a master mind like Wolfe's.' On July 27, 1778, Admiral (afterwards Viscount) Keppel met Count D'Orvilliers off Ushant. After three hours' indecisive engagement, he made signals and sent orders to Sir Hugh Palliser, his second in command, to renew the contest; but the latter being unable to do so, in consequence of his own ship being disabled, the French fleet got away to Brest, and Keppel retired to Plymouth. Palliser charged his chief with misconduct and incapacity. A court-martial ensued, which, after sitting for thirty-two days, decided that these charges were 'malicious and unfounded,' and that Keppel had acted 'as became a judicious, brave, and experienced officer'; and the thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to him. Hereupon Sir Hugh demanded a court-martial on himself; and after twenty-three days, he too was pronounced to have shown himself 'in many respects an exemplary and meritorious officer.' These indecisive actions greatly irritated the impetuous patriotism of Cowper, and made him exclaim,

> 'Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
> Impatient to descry the flags of France;
> But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
> Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.'

In April, 1780, Rodney was engaged in ineffectual skirmishes in the West India Isles with the French and Spanish fleets, under Count de Guichen and Admiral Solano; but the latter evaded a general engagement. So in 1781, Admiral Graves with nineteen ships of the line, had a gallant encounter at the mouth of the Chesapeake, with Count de Grasse and a fleet of twenty-eight French ships; but they parted without any decisive result. Again on Aug. 5, in that year, Sir Hyde Parker, who was escorting a merchant fleet from the Baltic, fell in with a Dutch squadron under Admiral Zouttman, off the Dogger Bank. After heavy loss on both sides, the latter

bore away to the Texel; and Parker found himself not in a condition to follow him.

The history of India in Cowper's time resolves itself into the story of the career of two men, Clive and Hastings. Robert Clive, born in 1725, began life as a Writer in the East India Company's service at Madras. In 1747 he exchanged the desk for the camp; and in 1751 he withdrew the French under Duplex from Trichinopoly, by the occupation of Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, which he took on Aug. 31; and this was followed by other brilliant successes in the Madras Presidency. The settlement of Calcutta, founded by the English in 1689, and strengthened by the erection of Fort William in 1698, was conquered in 1756 by Surajah Dowlah, the Nawab of Bengal. On the 20th of June he shut up 146 captives in the notorious Black Hole, a room just eighteen feet square, whence only twenty-three came out alive the next morning. Clive retook Calcutta, Jan. 2, 1757; and on June 23, with an army of 3000 men (two thirds of whom were Sepoys), he defeated the Surajah with 68,000 men, at Plassey; and in his place set up Mir Jaffier on the throne of Bengal. Thus was the British supremacy established in Northern India. In 1765 the Nawab of Oude and Shah-Ahum the eldest son of the Great Mogul, made an effort to depose Mir Jaffier. Clive came to his support; and Jaffier testified his gratitude by bestowing on him the quit-rent which the East India Company were bound to pay to their Nawab, amounting to some £30,000 per annum.

By the Treaty of Allahabad in the same year, the Great Mogul ceded to the Company the revenues of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, for an annual payment of twelve lacs of rupees; by which transaction the administration and sovereignty of the country was secured to the Company. In 1767 the Presidency of Madras was attacked by Hyder Ali, the Sultan of Mysore; but peace was restored in 1769. Clive had been created an Irish Peer in 1760, by the title of Lord Clive, Baron of Plassey; and he finally returned to England in 1767. In May, 1773, a vote of censure upon him was brought forward in the House of Commons, by Burgoyne; the charge

being that Clive, in the acquisition of his wealth, had 'abused his powers, and set an evil example to the servants of the public.' This did not pass; the House agreeing almost unanimously to the amendment of Wedderburn, 'that Robert Lord Clive did at the same time render great and meritorious services to his country.' Yet the fact that such a motion should have been brought up at all, preyed so much upon the mind of Clive, that he put an end to his own life a few months afterwards. It is with reference to Clive's career in India, that Cowper expostulates with his country, as

> 'Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
> A despot big with power obtained by wealth,
> And that obtained by rapine and by stealth.'

Warren Hastings, an old Westminster schoolfellow of Cowper's, was sent out at the age of seventeen as a Writer to the Company, in 1750. After the battle of Plassey, he was appointed to reside as the Company's agent, at the Court of Mir Jaffier; and in 1761 he became a member of the Council at Calcutta. Having returned to England in 1764, he was sent out again in 1769 as a member of the Madras Council; and in 1772 he was placed by the Directors at the head of the Bengal Government. The internal government had hitherto been entrusted to a native minister, responsible only to the British rulers of the country. Hastings abolished this office, transferred the civil administration to the Company's servants, and thus extinguished even the nominal authority of the Hindoo rulers. He next turned his attention to economic matters. The annual payment of £320,000 to the Nawab of Bengal was curtailed to one half, and the Great Mogul's pension of £300,000, was entirely withdrawn from him. Furthermore, Hastings made an actual sale of Corah and Allahabad to the Nawab of Oude, for half a million sterling; and even hired out British troops to him, for a sum of £400,000, to aid him in the subjugation of the Rohillas, a tribe of Affghans. By these means the annual income of the Company was increased by £450,000, and a sum of nearly a million secured in ready money; whilst the military expenses,

which had cost the Company about a quarter of a million a year, were defrayed by the Nawab of Oude. In 1774, Lord North's Act of Regulations was introduced into India. By this it was provided, that the Governor of Bengal should become the Governor-General of all the British possessions in India, with the highest civil and military powers; that he should be assisted by a Supreme Council of four members, who were entrusted with the civil and criminal jurisdiction; that a Supreme Court of Judicature should be erected by the Crown, with appeal to the Privy Council; that all declarations of war and peace, and all negociations with native powers, should be vested in the Governor-General and the Supreme Council; and that all regulations, civil and military, should be laid before the Secretary of State in England, with a power in the Crown to annul them. Finally, Hastings was made the first Governor-General, for a period of five years. But disputes soon arose between him and the Supreme Council, and the latter brought charges of corruption against him; while the Hindoo population were incensed by the execution (for forgery) of Nuncomar, their chief Brahmin, who had been the personal foe of Hastings. Hereupon the latter resigned his office: but on the arrival of a successor to supersede him, he declared his resignation to be invalid; and as the Supreme Court supported him in this, he was quietly re-appointed at the end of the five years. Meanwhile the Mahratta tribes, originally mere freebooters, became powerful in Guzerat, Berar, and Tanjore. In 1779, their Peshwa, residing at Poonah, allied himself with Hyder Ali against the Company. They invaded the Carnatic, and maintained their position until, in 1781, Sir Eyre Coote defea ed Hyder Ali at Porto Novo, with a force of barely 9000 men against 150,000, July 1; and again at Pollilore, Aug. 27. The peace with France, in 1783, put an end for a time to this war, which had been continued by Hyder's son, Tippo Saib. In 1784, the younger Pitt passed his East India Bill. By this a Board of Control was erected, and the Company's servants were made responsible, in respect of territorial dominion and patronage, to the Government at home. Warren Hastings returned to England

in 1785, and was impeached before the House of Lords. The trial was protracted till April, 1795; when he was acquitted upon each charge brought against him. In the next year the East India Company granted him an annual pension of £4000; besides lending him a sum of £50,000 for eighteen years without interest. Cowper always believed that his old schoolfellow had been 'injuriously treated,' and 'as an act merely of justice' addressed to him the following lines, which he sent to Lady Hesketh,

> 'Hastings! I knew thee young, and of a mind,
> While young, humane, conversable, and kind;
> Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,
> Now grown a villain and the worst of men;
> But rather some suspect, who have oppressed
> And worried thee, as not themselves the best.'

With this kindly tribute to the friend of his school days, we take our leave of William Cowper. As a Poet, he commands our admiration; as a Man, he wins our sympathy and love. There are greater English Poets than he, yet in his own age none greater; and throughout his life, saddened as it was by the most distressing of all maladies, he maintained the noble character of a Man, a Gentleman, and an Englishman.

THE DIDACTIC POEMS

OF 1782,

WITH SELECTIONS FROM THE MINOR PIECES

A.D. 1779—1783.

THE

LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.

THUS says the prophet of the Turk,
'Good Mussulman, abstain from pork;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication.'
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
[Had he the sinful part expressed,
They might with safety eat the rest;
But for one piece they thought it hard
From the whole hog to be debarred;
And set their wit at work to find
What joint the prophet had in mind.]
Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head;
While others at that doctrine rail,
And piously prefer the tail.
Thus, Conscience freed from every clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.
You laugh—'tis well—the tale applied
May make you laugh on t'other side.
'Renounce the world'—the preacher cries.
'We do'—a multitude replies.

While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards;
And one, whatever you may say,
Can see no evil in a play;
Some love a concert, or a race;
And others shooting, and the chase.
Reviled and loved, renounced and followed,
Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallowed;
Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
Yet likes a slice as well as he:
With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

THE PINEAPPLE AND THE BEE.

THE Pineapples, in triple row,
Were basking hot, and all in blow;
A Bee of most discerning taste
Perceived the fragrance as he passed,
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And searched for crannies in the frame,
Urged his attempt on every side,
To every pane his trunk applied,
But still in vain, the frame was tight,
And only pervious to the light:
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimmed his flight another way.
'Methinks,' I said, 'in thee I find
The sin and madness of mankind.
To joys forbidden man aspires,
Consumes his soul with vain desires;
Folly the spring of his pursuit,
And disappointment all the fruit.
While Cynthio ogles, as she passes,
The nymph between two chariot glasses,
She is the Pineapple, and he
The silly unsuccessful Bee.

The maid who views with pensive air
The show-glass fraught with glittering ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets;
Like thine, her appetite is keen,
But ah, the cruel glass between!'
  Our dear delights are often such;
Exposed to view, but not to touch.
The sight our foolish heart inflames,
We long for pineapples in frames;
With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers;
But they whom Truth and Wisdom lead
Can gather honey from a weed.

ON THE PROMOTION OF

EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ.,

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,
  And in his sportive days,
Fair Science poured the light of truth,
  And Genius shed his rays.

'See!' with united wonder, cried
  The experienced and the sage,
'Ambition in a boy supplied
  With all the skill of age.

'Discernment, Eloquence, and Grace,
  Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
  And bear the palm away.'

The praise bestowed was just and wise,
He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
What all had deemed his own.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day;
I only wish 'twould come
(As who knows but perhaps it may?)
A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
On the other side the Atlantic,
I always held them in the right,
But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the Court,
That man shall be my toast,
If breaking windows be the sport,
Who bravely breaks the most.

But oh! for him my Fancy culls
The choicest flowers she bears,
Who constitutionally pulls
Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
Though some folks can't endure them,
Who say the mob are mad outright,
And that a rope must cure them.

A rope! I wish we patriots had
  Such strings for all who need 'em—
What! hang a man for going mad!
  Then farewell British freedom.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glowworm by his spark;
So stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent;—
  'Did you admire my lamp,' quoth he,
'As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For 'twas the self-same Power Divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night.'
The songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.
  Hence jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern;

That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other;
But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of Nature and of Grace.
Those Christians best deserve the name
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace, both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

THE DOVES.

REASONING at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wandered late,
And heard the voice of love;
The turtle thus addressed her mate,
And soothed the listening dove:—

'Our mutual bond of faith and truth
No time shall disengage,
Those blessings of our early youth
Shall cheer our latest age:

'While innocence without disguise
And constancy sincere,
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
And mine can read them there,

'Those ills that wait on all below,
Shall ne'er be felt by me,
Or gently felt, and only so,
As being shared with thee.

'When lightnings flash among the trees,
Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
And know no other fear.

''Tis then I feel myself a wife,
And press thy wedded side,
Resolved a union formed for life
Death never shall divide.

'But oh! if, fickle and unchaste,
(Forgive a transient thought)
Thou couldst become unkind at last,
And scorn thy present lot,

'No need of lightnings from on high,
Or kites with cruel beak;
Denied the endearments of thine eye,
This widowed heart would break.'

Thus sang the sweet sequestered bird,
Soft as the passing wind,
And I recorded what I heard,
A lesson for mankind.

ON THE

BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS. BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw!

And Murray sighs o'er Pope, and Swift,
And many a treasure more,
The well judged purchase, and the gift
That graced his lettered store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
The loss was his alone;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of his own.

ON THE SAME.

WHEN Wit and Genius meet their doom
In all-devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome,
And bid us fear the same.

O'er Murray's loss the Muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet blessed the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

ON A GOLDFINCH,

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

TIME was when I was free as air,
The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink the morning dew;
I perched at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel were all in vain,
And of a transient date;
For caught and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
Soon passed the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close
And cure of every ill!
More cruelty could none express;
And I, if you had shown me less,
Had been your prisoner still.

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE,

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
While Chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

'In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship,' he said, 'will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.'

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
'Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
As wide as the bridge of the Nose is; in short,
Designed to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

'Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happened, and may be again)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

'On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.'

Then shifting his side, as a lawyer knows how,
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes;
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed, with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one if or but—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut.

TABLE TALK.

'Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,
Abjicite.'

HOR. Lib. I. Ep. 13.

[ARGUMENT:—True and false glory, 1—Kings made for men, 47—Royalty in England, 63—Quevedo's satire on kings, 94—Kings to be pitied, 108—Englishmen's scorn of arbitrary rule, 205—French and English character contrasted, 235—Blessings of freedom, 261—Freedom needs the restraints of law, 311—Instance in the Gordon Riots, 319—Patriotism of Chatham, 337—Political dangers of England, 363—National corruption portends national ruin, 415—Politics and Providence, 439—Poets are Prophets, 481—Lofty subjects to be chosen for Poetry, 507—Homer, Virgil, Milton, 557—Progress of Poesy, 569—Religion the highest theme for the Poet, 718.]

A. You told me, I remember, glory built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt,
The deeds that men admire as half divine
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears
The laurel that the very lightning spares,
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant that men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war;
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with Justice on his side.
Let laurels drenched in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward his memory, dear to every Muse,

Who with a courage of unshaken root,
In Honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
His portion in the good that Heaven bestows;
And when recording History displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts that fought and died
Where Duty placed them, at their country's side;
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.
  But let eternal Infamy pursue
The wretch, to naught but his ambition true,
Who for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself stationed on a towering rock,
To see a people scattered like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels;
Then view him, self-proclaimed in a gazette,
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet!
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced!
The glass that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
And Death's own scythe, would better speak his power;
Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade;
Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
The same their occupation and success.
  A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man,
Kings do but reason on the selfsame plan;
Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.
  B. Seldom, alas! the power of logic reigns
With much sufficiency in royal brains;

Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
Man made for kings! those optics are but dim
That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.
That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
The diadem, with mighty projects lined,
To catch renown by ruining mankind,
Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,
Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.
O bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood!
To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward;
Keep Vice restrained behind a double guard;
To quell the faction that affronts the throne,
By silent magnanimity alone;
To nurse with tender care the thriving Arts;
Watch every beam Philosophy imparts;
To give Religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope;
With close fidelity and love unfeigned,
To keep the matrimonial bond unstained;
Covetous only of a virtuous praise;
His life a lesson to the land he sways;
To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
Nor draw it, but when Duty bids him draw;
To sheath it, in the peace-restoring close,
With joy beyond what Victory bestows;
Blest country, where these kingly glories shine!
Blest England, if this happiness be thine!
A. Guard what you say; the patriotic tribe
Will sneer, and charge you with a bribe.—B. A bribe!
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,
To lure me to the baseness of a lie.
And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast),
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.
Those arts be theirs that hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign.

A. Your smooth eulogium, to one crown addressed,
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.
B. Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
Asked, when in Hell, to see the royal jail;
Approved their method in all other things,
'But where, good sir, do you confine your kings?'
'There,' said his guide, 'the group is full in view.'
'Indeed,' replied the Don, 'there are but few.'
His black interpreter the charge disdained—
'Few, fellow!—there are all that ever reigned.'
Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty, both alike;
I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here,
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the Sixth Edward's, grace the historic page.
A. Kings then, at last, have but the lot of all;
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.
B. True. While they live, the courtly laureate pays
His quitrent ode, his peppercorn of praise,
And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite;
A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game.
Thus free from censure, overawed by fear,
And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage;
Then leave their crimes for History to scan,
And ask, with busy scorn, 'Was this the man?'
I pity kings whom Worship waits upon,
Obsequious, from the cradle to the throne;
Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows;
Whom Education stiffens into state,
And Death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if Servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please;

If smooth Dissimulation, skilled to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;
If smiling peeresses, and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years;
If the gilt carriage, and the pampered steed,
That wants no driving and disdains the lead;
If guards, mechanically formed in ranks
Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks.
Shouldering, and standing as if struck to stone
While condescending Majesty looks on;
If monarchy consist in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings!

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
E'en when he labours for his country's good;
To see a band, called patriot, for no cause
But that they catch at popular applause,
Careless of all the anxiety he feels,
Hook disappointment on the public wheels;
With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
Most confident, when palpably most wrong;
If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship, and may I be poor and free!

To be the Table Talk of clubs up stairs,
To which the unwashed artificer repairs
To indulge his genius, after long fatigue,
By diving into cabinet intrigue,
(For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
To him is relaxation and mere play;)
To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,
But to be rudely censured when they fail;
To doubt the love his favourites may pretend,
And in reality to find no friend;
If he indulge a cultivated taste,
His galleries with the works of art well graced,
To hear it called extravagance and waste;
If these attendants, and if such as these,
Must follow royalty, then welcome ease;
However humble and confined the sphere,

Happy the state that has not these to fear.
A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have dwelt
On situations that they never felt,
Start up sagacious, covered with the dust
Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
And prate and preach about what others prove,
As if the world and they were hand and glove.
Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares,
They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs;
Poets, of all men, ever least regret
Increasing taxes and the nation's debt;
Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,
No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
Should claim my fixed attention more than you.
B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
To turn the course of Helicon that way;
Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
The leathern ears of stockjobbers and Jews.
A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.
When ministers and ministerial arts;
Patriots, who love good places at their hearts;
When admirals, extolled for standing still,
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill;
Generals, who will not conquer when they may,
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay;
When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,
Though Discontent alone can find out where;
When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
I hear as mute as if a Syren sung.
Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains
A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains?
That were a theme might animate the dead,
And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

B. The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
They take perhaps a well directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Liberal in all things else, yet Nature here
With stern severity deals out the year;
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers;
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
Ungenial blasts attending curl the streams;
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work;
Thus with a rigour, for his good designed,
She rears her favourite man of all mankind.
His form robust and of elastic tone,
Proportioned well, half muscle and half bone,
Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.
Hence Liberty, sweet Liberty, inspires
And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul;
But if Authority grow wanton, woe
To him that treads upon his free-born toe;
One step beyond the boundary of the laws
Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.
Thus proud Prerogative, not much revered,
Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard;
And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.
  Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not formed like us, with such Herculean powers,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of misery far away;
He drinks his simple beverage with a gust,
And, feasting on an onion and a crust;

We never feel the alacrity and joy
With which he shouts and carols, '*Vive le Roy!*'
Filled with as much true merriment and glee,
As if he heard his king say, 'Slave, be free!'
Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that he has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid;
Bids equity throughout his works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale;
He can encourage slavery to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.

A. Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,
Stand on a level, and you prove too much.
If all men indiscriminately share
His fostering power, and tutelary care,
As well be yoked by Despotism's hand,
As dwell at large in Britain's chartered land.

B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains, beneath her happy reign,
The growth that Nature meant she should attain;
The varied fields of science, ever new,
Opening and wider opening on her view,
She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
While no base fear impedes her in her course;
Religion, richest favour of the skies,
Stands most revealed before the freeman's eyes;
No shades of superstition blot the day,
Liberty chases all that gloom away;
The soul, emancipated, unoppressed,
Free to prove all things, and hold fast the best,
Learns much, and to a thousand listening minds
Communicates, with joy, the good she finds;
Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show
His manly forehead to the fiercest foe;
Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
His spirits rising as his toils increase,

Guards well what Arts and Industry have won,
And Freedom claims him for her firstborn son.
Slaves fight for what were better cast away,
The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway;
But they that fight for freedom, undertake
The noblest cause mankind can have at stake;
Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
A blessing, freedom is the pledge of all.
O Liberty! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
The poet's muse, his passion, and his theme;
Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse;
Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse;
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires:
Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,
And I will sing, if Liberty be there;
And I will sing, at Liberty's dear feet,
In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.

A. Sing where you please, in such a cause I grant
An English poet's privilege to rant,
But is not Freedom, at least, is not ours,
Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,
Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping every mound,
Spread anarchy and terror all around?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
For bounding and curvetting in his course;
Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
He break away, and seek the distant plain?
No. His high mettle, under good control,
Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.
Let Discipline employ her wholesome arts;
Let Magistrates alert perform their parts,
Not skulk, or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desperate task;
Let active Laws apply the needful curb,
To guard the Peace that Riot would disturb;
And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.

When Tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar;
When he usurped Authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face;
When the rude rabble's watchword was—'Destroy!'
And blazing London seemed a second Troy,
Liberty blushed, and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread,
Blushed that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce Licentiousness should bear the blame.
Incomparable gem! thy worth untold;
Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold;
May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend;
Prize it, ye ministers; ye monarchs, spare;
Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care.

A. Patriots, alas! the few that have been found,
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene when Chatham died.

B. Not so. The virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him, Demosthenes was heard again,
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain,
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a [illegible] or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose.
And every venal stickler for the yoke,
Felt himself crushed at the first word he spoke.
Such men are raised to station and command,
When Providence means mercy to a land.

He speaks, and they appear; to him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow,
To manage with address, to seize with power,
The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
So Gideon earned a victory not his own,
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.
Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear.
The nations hunt, all mark thee for a prey,
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay,
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplexed.
Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee next?
Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
All that should be the boast of British song.
'Tis not the wreath that once adorned thy brow,
The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.
Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,
Patterns of every virtue, every grace,
Confessed a God; they kneeled before they fought,
And praised him in the victories He wrought;
Now, from the dust of ancient days, bring forth
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;
Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
The stream that feeds the wellspring of the heart
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
Than Virtue quickens, with a warmth divine,
The powers that Sin has brought to a decline.
A. The inestimable Estimate of Brown
Rose like a paper-kite, and charmed the town;
But measures planned and executed well,
Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
He trod the very selfsame ground you tread,
And Victory refuted all he said.
B. And yet his judgment was not framed amiss;
Its error, if it erred, was merely this—
He thought the dying hour already come,
And a complete recovery struck him dumb.

But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must;
And that a nation shamefully debased,
Will be despised and trampled on at last,
Unless sweet Penitence her powers renew,
Is truth, if history itself be true.
There is a time, and Justice marks the date,
For long forbearing Clemency to wait;
That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt
Is punished, and down comes the thunderbolt.
If Mercy then put by the threatening blow,
Must she perform the same kind office now?
May she! and if offended Heaven be still
Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.
'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
The tempest of tumultuary joys,
Nor is it yet despondence and dismay,
Will win her visits or engage her stay;
Prayer only, and the penitential tear,
Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.
But when a country (one that I could name)
In prostitution sinks the sense of shame;
When infamous Venality, grown bold,
Writes on his bosom, 'To be let or sold;'
When Perjury, that Heaven-defying vice,
Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,
Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,
To turn a penny in the way of trade;
When Avarice starves, and never hides his face,
Two or three millions of the human race,
And not a tongue inquires how, where, or when,
Though conscience will have twinges now and then;
When profanation of the sacred cause
In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fallen and lost,
In all that wars against that title most;
What follows next, let cities of great name,
And regions long since desolate, proclaim.

Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,
Speak to the present times, and times to come;
They cry aloud in every careless ear,
'Stop, while ye may; suspend your mad career;
O learn, from our example and our fate,
Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late.'
Not only Vice disposes and prepares
The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to Tyranny's usurped command,
And bend her polished neck beneath his hand,
(A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws
Unchangeably connected with its cause)
But Providence himself will intervene,
To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are his instruments; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that overset the joys of life,
Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
He gives the word, and Mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores;
The standards of all nations are unfurled;
She has one foe, and that one foe, the world.
And if He doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with a seal of wrath pressed down,
Obduracy takes place; callous and tough,
The reprobated race grows judgment-proof:
Earth shakes beneath them, and Heaven roars above,
But nothing scares them from the course they love;
To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
With mad rapidity and unconcern,
Down to the gulf from which is no return.
They trust in navies and their navies fail—
God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail!
They trust in armies, and their courage dies;
In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies;

But all they trust in withers, as it must,
When He commands in whom they place no trust.
Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast,
A long despised, but now victorious, host;
Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
The noble sweep of all their privilege,
Gives Liberty the last, the mortal shock,
Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.
A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach,
Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach?
B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
The Muse imparts, and can command the lyre
Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
Whate'er the theme, that others never feel;
If human woes her soft attention claim,
A tender sympathy pervades the frame,
She pours a sensibility divine
Along the nerve of every feeling line;
But if a deed not tamely to be borne
Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,
The storm of music shakes the astonished crowd.
So, when remote futurity is brought
Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
A terrible sagacity informs
The poet's heart; he looks to distant storms;
He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers;
And armed with strength surpassing human powers,
Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
Of prophet and of poet was the same;
Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
And every hallowed Druid was a bard.
But no prophetic fires to me belong;
I play with syllables, and sport in song.
A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
To set a distich upon six and five,

Where Discipline helps opening buds of sense,
And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
I was a poet too: but modern taste
Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
Thus, all success depending on an ear,
And thinking I might purchase it too dear,
If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
And truth cut short to make a period round,
I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse,
Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.
B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
When Labour and when Dullness, club in hand,
Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's stand,
Beating alternately, in measured time,
The clockwork tintinnabulum of rhyme,
Exact and regular the sounds will be,
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.
From him who rears a poem lank and long,
To him who strains his all into a song,
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
All birks and braes, though he was never there;
Or, having whelped a prologue with great pains,
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains;
A prologue interdashed with many a stroke,
An art contrived to advertise a joke,
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between;
Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.
To dally much with subjects mean and low
Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.

Neglected talents rust into decay,
And every effort ends in push-pin play.
The man that means success, should soar above
A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove,
Else summoning the Muse to such a theme,
The fruit of all her labour is whipped cream;
As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
Stooped from its highest pitch to pounce a wren;
As if the poet, purposing to wed,
Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.
  Ages elapsed ere HOMER'S lamp appeared,
And ages ere the MANTUAN SWAN was heard;
To carry nature lengths unknown before,
To give a MILTON birth, asked ages more.
Thus genius rose and set at ordered times,
And shot a dayspring into distant climes;
Ennobling every region that he chose,
He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose,
And, tedious years of Gothic darkness passed,
Emerged all splendour in our isle at last;
Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
Then show far off their shining plumes again.
  A. Is genius only found in epic lays?
Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.
Make their heroic powers your own at once,
Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.
  B. These were the chief; each interval of night
Was graced with many an undulating light;
In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
A meteor, or a star; in these, the sun.
  The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,
While the poor grasshopper must chirp below;
Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly;
Perched on the meagre produce of the land,
An ell or two of prospect we command,
But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
Or oaken fence that hems the paddock round.

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
Had faded, poetry was not an art;
Language, above all teaching, or if taught,
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
Elegant as simplicity, and warm
As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,
Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent—a God the theme!
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as his love.
Man lavished all his thoughts on human things,
The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings;
But still, while Virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral, and so far was right.
'Twas thus till Luxury seduced the mind
To joys less innocent, as less refined;
Then Genius danced a Bacchanal; he crowned
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
His brows with ivy, rushed into the field
Of wild imagination, and there reeled,
The victim of his own lascivious fires,
And dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires:
Anacreon, Horace, played in Greece and Rome
This Bedlam part; and others nearer home.
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reigned,
The proud Protector of the power he gained,
Religion harsh, intolerant, austere,
Parent of manners like herself severe,
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face,
Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace;
The dark and sullen humour of the time
Judged every effort of the Muse a crime;
Verse in the finest mould of fancy cast,
Was lumber in an age so void of taste.
But when the Second Charles assumed the sway,
And arts revived beneath a softer day,

Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,
The mind, released from too constrained a nerve,
Flew to its first position, with a spring
That made the vaulted roofs of Pleasure ring.
His court, the dissolute and hateful school
Of Wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
Swarmed with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.
From these a long succession, in the rage
Of rank obscenity, debauched their age
Nor ceased till, ever anxious to redress
The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
The Muse instructed a well nurtured train
Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
And claim the palm for purity of song,
That Lewdness had usurped and worn so long.
Then decent Pleasantry and sterling Sense,
That neither gave nor would endure offence,
Whipped out of sight, with satire just and keen,
The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.
In front of these came ADDISON. In him
Humour in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and Attic taste combined,
To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
Then POPE, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,
Gave Virtue and Morality a grace,
That, quite eclipsing Pleasure's painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
E'en on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to ARBUTHNOT and SWIFT,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.

That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.
A. Are we then left—B. Not wholly in the dark:
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser who disdains the road,
Snuffs up the wind and flings himself abroad.
Contemporaries all surpassed, see one,
Short his career, indeed, but ably run;
CHURCHILL, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours,
And, like a scattered seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in LUXURY'S soft lap,
And took, too often, there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,
Too proud for art and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdained the rules he understood,
The laurel seemed to wait on his command,
He snatched it rudely from the Muse's hand.
Nature exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower,
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads,
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes,
And charms the woodland scenes, and wilds unknown,
With artless airs and concerts of her own;

But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
Fancy that from the bow that spans the sky,
Brings colours dipped in Heaven, that never die;
A soul exalted above Earth, a mind
Skilled in the characters that form mankind;
And as the sun in rising beauty dressed,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close;
An eye like his to catch the distant goal,
Or ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On every scene and subject it surveys:
Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.
Pity Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground!
The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
And every Muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penned,
But unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undressed,
Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure, like a withered thorn.
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped,
Hackneyed and worn to the last flimsy thread;
Satire has long since done his best, and curst
And loathsome Ribaldry has done his worst,
Fancy has sported all her powers away
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play;
And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,
Touched with a coal from Heaven, assume the lyre,

And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That He who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.
For, after all, if merely to beguile,
By flowing numbers and a flowery style,
The tædium that the lazy rich endure,
Which now and then sweet Poetry may cure,
Or, if to see the name of idol self,
Stamped on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,
To float a bubble on the breath of Fame,
Prompt his endeavour, and engage his aim,
Debased to servile purposes of Pride,
How are the powers of genius misapplied!
The gift whose office is the Giver's praise,
To trace Him in his word, his works, his ways!
Then spread the rich discovery, and invite
Mankind to share in the divine delight;
Distorted from its use and just design,
To make the pitiful possessor shine,
To purchase, at the fool-frequented fair
Of Vanity, a wreath for self to wear,
Is profanation of the basest kind—
Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.
A. Hail, Sternhold then, and, Hopkins, hail!
B. Amen.
If Flattery, Folly, Lust, employ the pen;
If Acrimony, Slander, and Abuse,
Give it a charge to blacken and traduce;
Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,
With all that Fancy can invent to please,
Adorn the polished periods as they fall,
One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.
A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,
To dash the pen through all that you proscribe,
B. No matter;—we could shift when they were not;
And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

'Si quid loquar audiendum.'
HOR. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

[ARGUMENT :—Origin of error, 1—Man endowed with free will, 23—Motives for action, 45—Allurements of pleasure, 57—Music, 63—The chase, 82—Such amusements unsuited to the clergy, 96—Occiduus, 124—Force of example, 142—Sabbath desecration, 152—Cards and dancing, 169—Drunkenness and trifling, 199—Gluttony, 209—Virtuous pleasures, 243—Excess in pleasure pernicious, 269—Corrupt works of imagination, 307—Lord Chesterfield, 335—Importance of early education, 353—Foreign travel, 369—Accomplishments in the place of virtues, 417—Qualifications of the Biblical critic, 452—Power of the Press, 460—Effects of enthusiasm, 470—Partiality of authors for their literary progeny, 516—The dunce impatient of contradiction, 536—Moral and intellectual errors produce each other, 564—Force of habit, 580.]

SING, Muse, (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a Muse to grace it with a song)
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Error twines round human hearts;
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine!
Truths that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.
  Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,

Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end,
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear;
Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display
Shines as it runs, but grasped at, slips away.
Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse;
Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say to what bar amenable were man?
With naught in charge, he could betray no trust,
And if he fell, would fall because he must;
If Love reward him, or if Vengeance strike,
His recompense in both unjust alike.
Divine authority within his breast
Brings every thought, word, action, to the test;
Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
As Reason, or as Passion, takes the reins.
Heaven from above, and Conscience from within,
Cry in his startled ear, 'Abstain from sin!'
The world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire,
While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows Virtue as its sure reward,
And Pleasure brings as surely in her train,
Remorse, and Sorrow, and vindictive Pain.
Man thus endued with an elective voice,
Must be supplied with objects of his choice;
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight;
Those open on the spot their honeyed store,
These call him loudly to pursuit of more.
His unexhausted mine, the sordid vice
Avarice shows, and virtue is the price;

Here various motives his ambition raise,
Power, Pomp, and Splendour, and the Thirst of Praise;
There Beauty woos him with expanded arms;
Even Bacchanalian Madness has its charms.
Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined
Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,
Or lead him devious from the path of truth;
Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.
Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air!
Oh what a dying, dying close was there!
'Tis Harmony from yon sequestered bower,
Sweet Harmony that soothes the midnight hour;
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course, the enchantment was begun,
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.
Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That Virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?
Ye devotees to your adored employ,
Enthusiasts drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above
Heaven's harmony is universal love,
And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
Leave Vice and Folly unsubdued behind.
Grey dawn appears; the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain;
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs,
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,
True beagle as the staunchest hound he keeps.
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean;
The joy, the danger and the toil o'erpays;

'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days;
Again, impetuous to the field he flies,
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies;
Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmissed but by his dogs and by his groom.
Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race;
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigies ominous, and viewed with fear;
The comet's baneful influence is a dream,
Yours real, and pernicious in the extreme.
What then!—are appetites and lusts laid down
With the same ease that man puts on his gown?
Will Avarice and Concupiscence give place,
Charmed by the sounds, 'Your Reverence,' or 'Your Grace?'
No. But his own engagement binds him fast,
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,
What atheists call him, a designing knave,
A mere church-juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
Oh laugh or mourn with me, the rueful jest,
A cassocked huntsman, and a fiddling priest!
He from Italian songsters takes his cue;
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
He takes the field, the master of the pack
Cries—'Well done, Saint!' and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss?
Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
Go, cast your orders at your Bishop's feet,
Send your dishonoured gown to Monmouth Street,
The sacred function, in your hands is made—
Sad sacrilege! no function, but a trade!
Occiduus is a pastor of renown;
When he has prayed and preached the sabbath down,
With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
Quavering and semiquavering care away.

The full concerto swells upon your ear;
All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
Had summoned them to serve his golden god;
So well that thought the employment seems to suit,
Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
Oh fie! 'Tis evangelical and pure;
Observe each face, how sober and demure!
Ecstasy sets her stamp on every mien,
Chins fallen, and not an eye-ball to be seen.
Still I insist, though music heretofore
Has charmed me much (not even Occiduus more)
Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.
  Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
Resort to this example as a rock,
There stand, and justify the foul abuse
Of sabbath hours with plausible excuse?
If apostolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay!
Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.
  O Italy!—Thy sabbaths will be soon
Our sabbaths, closed with mummery and buffoon;
Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
Ours parcelled out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship and the mountebank between.
What says the prophet? Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest;
Pastime and business both, it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude;
Nobly distinguished above all the six,
By deeds in which the world must never mix.
Hear him again. He calls it a delight,
A day of luxury, observed aright,
When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest,
Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.

But triflers are engaged and cannot come;
Their answer to the call is—'Not at home.'
O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again!
Cards, with what rapture, and the polished die,
The yawning chasm of indolence supply!
Then to the dance; and make the sober moon
Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
The snug, close party, or the splendid hall,
Where Night, down-stooping from her ebon throne,
Views constellations brighter than her own.
'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined,
The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.
Innocent! Oh! if venerable Time
Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,
Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,
Let Comus rise Archbishop of the land,
Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
Grand Metropolitan of all the tribe.
Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
Rufillus, exquisitely formed by rule,
Not of the moral, but the dancing school,
Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
As tragical, as others at his own.
He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
Then kill a constable, and drink five more,
But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
And has the Ladies' Etiquette by heart.
Go, fool; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
Your cause before a bar you little dread;
But know, the law that bids the drunkard die,
Is far too just to pass the trifler by.
Both baby-featured, and of infant size,
Viewed from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
Folly and Innocence are so alike,
The difference, though essential, fails to strike.

Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
A simpering countenance, and a trifling air;
But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
Delights us, by engaging our respect.
Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,
Receives from her both appetite and treat;
But, if he play the glutton and exceed,
His benefactress blushes at the deed,
For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,
Made nothing but a brute, the slave of sense.
Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare!
Heaven blessed the youth, and made him fresh and fair;
Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,
Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan
He snuffs far off the anticipated joy,
Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ,
Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,
O nauseous!—an emetic for a whet!
Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?
Temperance were no virtue if He could.
That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
Are hurtful is a truth confessed by all;
And some that seem to threaten virtue less,
Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess.
Is man then only for his torment placed,
The centre of delights he may not taste?
Like fabled Tantalus, condemned to hear
The precious stream still purling in his ear,
Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition and perpetual thirst?
No, wrangler,—destitute of shame and sense,
The precept that enjoins him abstinence,
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid
In every bosom where her nest is made,
Hatched by the beams of truth, denies him rest,
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.

No pleasure! Are domestic comforts dead?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame?
All these belong to virtue, and all prove
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity that the poor
Stand starved at your inhospitable door?
Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,
Need help, let honest industry provide.
Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart;
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
No pleasure! Has some sickly eastern waste
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast?
Can British Paradise no scenes afford
To please her sated and indifferent lord?
Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
Quite to the lees? And has religion none?
Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,
And judge you from the kennel and the sty.
Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
Ye are bid, begged, besought to entertain;
Called to these crystal streams, do ye turn off,
Obscene, to swill and swallow at a trough?
Envy the beast, then, on whom Heaven bestows
Your pleasures, with no curses in the close.
  Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice
Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use;
Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,
And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
The heart, surrendered to the ruling power
Of some ungoverned passion every hour,
Finds, by degrees, the truths that once bore sway,
And all their deep impressions, wear away;
So coin grows smooth, in traffic current passed,
Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last.

The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide,
In rushes Folly with a full moon tide,
Then welcome errors, of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon,
So sophistry cleaves close to and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be imposed on, and then are.
And lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
Not more industrious are the just and true
To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due;
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth;
Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race
To hide the shocking features of her face
Her form with dress and lotion they repair,
Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.
The sacred implement I now employ
Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy;
A trifle if it move but to amuse;
But if to wrong the judgment and abuse,
Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
It stabs at once the morals of a land.
Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads,
Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
Sniveling and driveling folly without end,
Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
With sentimental frippery, and dream,
Caught in a delicate, soft, silken net,
By some lewd earl, or rakehell baronet;
Ye pimps, who, under virtue's fair pretence,
Steal to the closet of young innocence,
And teach her, unexperienced yet and green,
To scribble as you scribbled, at fifteen;

Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
With some cold moral think to quench the fire;
Though all your engineering proves in vain,
The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again:
Oh that a verse had power, and could command
Far, far away, these flesh-flies of the land,
Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
And suck, and leave a craving maggot there!
Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
And covered with a fine-spun, specious veil,
Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust
And relish of their pleasure all to lust.

But the Muse, eagle-pinioned, has in view
A quarry more important still than you;
Down, down the wind, she swims, and sails away,
Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius! all the Muses weep for thee;
But every tear shall scald thy memory:
The Graces too, while Virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorred the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
Thou polished and high-finished foe to truth,
Greybeard corrupter of our listening youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
That, so refined, it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son,
To taint his heart, was worthy of thine own!
Now, while the poison all high life pervades,
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
That thy worst part, thy principles, live yet;
One sad epistle thence, may cure mankind
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.

'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The Mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,

And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
That Education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong,
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong,
And without discipline the favourite child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
But we, as if good qualities would grow
Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow;
We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek,
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week,
And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.
From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home,
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,
With reverend tutor, clad in habit lay,
To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day;
With memorandum-book for every town,
And every post, and where the chaise broke down;
His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
With much to learn, but nothing to impart,
The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands;
Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,
With awkward gait, stretched neck, and silly stare,
Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
And steeples towering high, much like our own,
But show peculiar light, by many a grin
At Popish practices observed within.
Ere long some bowing, smirking, smart Abbé
Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way,
And being always primed with *politesse*
For men of their appearance and address,
With much compassion undertakes the task
To tell them more than they have wit to ask;
Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
Such as, when legible, were never read,
But being cankered now, and half worn out,
Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt;

Some headless hero, or some Cæsar, shows—
Defective only in his Roman nose;
Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
Models of Herculanean pots and pans,
And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care.
Strange the recital! from whatever cause
His great improvement and new lights he draws,
The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,
But teems with powers he never felt before;
Whether increased momentum, and the force
With which from clime to clime he sped his course,
As axles sometimes kindle as they go,
Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow;
Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,
Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,
Unfolded genially and spread the man,
Returning, he proclaims, by many a grace,
By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
How much a dunce that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.
Accomplishments have taken Virtue's place,
And Wisdom falls before exterior grace;
We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
Elegant phrase, and figure formed to please,
Are qualities that seem to comprehend
Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend;
Hence an unfurnished and a listless mind,
Though busy, trifling; empty, though refined;
Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
With indolence and luxury, is trash;
While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side.
Learning itself, received into a mind
By nature weak, or viciously inclined,

Serves but to lead philosophers astray,
Where children would with ease discern the way;
And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is—Scripture warped from its intent.
  The carriage bowls along and all are pleased,
If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased,
But if the rogue be gone a cup too far,
Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
It suffers interruption and delay,
And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
When some hypothesis absurd and vain
Has filled with all its fumes a critic's brain,
The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
The Will made subject to a lawless force,
All is irregular, and out of course,
And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.
  A critic on the sacred book should be
Candid and learned, dispassionate and free;
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
From Fancy's influence, and intemperate Zeal;
But above all (or let the wretch refrain,
Nor touch the page he cannot but profane),
Free from the domineering power of Lust;
A lewd interpreter is never just.
  How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,
Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?
By thee, Religion, Liberty, and Laws,
Exert their influence, and advance their cause:
By thee, worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell,
Diffused, make Earth the vestibule of Hell;
Thou fountain at which drink the good and wise,
Thou ever bubbling spring of endless lies,
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.
  No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,

Till half mankind were like himself possessed.
Philosophers, who darken and put out
Eternal truth by everlasting doubt,
Church-quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discoverers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind,
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound;
Scorned by the nobler tenants of the flood,
Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome food;
The propagated myriads spread so fast,
E'en Leeuwenhoek himself would stand aghast,
Employed to calculate the enormous sum,
And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.
Is this hyperbole? The world well known,
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.
Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
From every hair-brained proselyte he makes,
And therefore prints, himself but half deceived,
Till others have the soothing tale believed.
Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line;
Hence the same word, that bids our lusts obey,
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
Hebrew, or Syriac, shall be forced to bend;
If languages and copies all cry, 'No!'
Somebody proved it centuries ago.
Like trout pursued, the critic in despair
Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there.
Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why)
With all the simple and unlettered poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore;
Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,

With such fine words familiar to his tongue.
Ye ladies! (for, indifferent in your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit all applause)
Whatever shocks, or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide),
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.
None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms.
Like something precious ventured far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream,
And daily more enamoured of the cheat,
Kneels and asks Heaven to bless the dear deceit;
So one, whose story serves at least to show
Men loved their own productions long ago,
Wooed an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the Gods had given it life.
If some mere driveller suck the sugared fib,
One that still needs his leading string and bib,
And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
In praise applied to the same part—his head;
For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.
Patient of contradiction as a child,
Affable, humble, diffident, and mild,
Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke,
Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
A muleteer's the man to set him right.
First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.
Tell him he wanders, that his error leads
To fatal ills; that though the path he treads
Be flowery, and he see no cause of fear,

Death and the pains of Hell attend him there;
In vain: the slave of arrogance and pride,
He has no hearing on the prudent side.
His still-refuted quirks he still repeats,
New raised objections with new quibbles meets,
Till sinking in the quicksand he defends,
He dies disputing, and the contest ends;
But not the mischiefs: they still left behind,
Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.
Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will,
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.
Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, one by lies,
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing, but to lose the race.
Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these, reciprocally, those again.
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image in each other's mint;
Each sire and dam, of an infernal race,
Begetting and conceiving all that's base.
None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.
For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wing
Or when it first forsakes the elastic string,
It err but little from the intended line,
It falls at last, far wide of his design;
So he who seeks a mansion in the sky,
Must watch his purpose with a stedfast eye,
That prize belongs to none but the sincere,
The least obliquity is fatal here.
With caution taste the sweet Circean cup,
He that sips often, at last drinks it up,
Habits are soon assumed, but when we strive
To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.
Called to the temple of impure delight,
He that abstains, and he alone, does right.

If a wish wander that way, call it home,
He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
But if you pass the threshold, you are caught,
Die then, if power Almighty save you not.
There hardening by degrees, till double steeled,
Take leave of nature's God, and God revealed,
Then laugh at all you trembled at before,
And joining the freethinkers' brutal roar,
Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—
That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense.
If clemency revolted by abuse
Be damnable, then damned without excuse.
Some dream that they can silence, when they will,
The storm of passion, and say, 'Peace, be still!'
But, 'Thus far and no farther,' when addressed
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority that never can,
That never ought to be the lot of man.
But, Muse, forbear; long flights forbode a fall,
Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.
Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies!
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies;
And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as Hell shall bind him fast.
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewildered once, must he bewail his loss
For ever and for ever? No—the Cross!
There, and there only, (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if Earth bear so base a slave)
There, and there only, is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair,
No mockery meets you, no deception there;
The spells and charms that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.
I am no preacher; let this hint suffice—
The Cross once seen is death to every vice;
Else He that hung there suffered all his pain,
Bled, groaned, and agonized, and died in vain.

TRUTH.

'Pensantur trutinâ:'—Hor. Lib. ii. Ep. 1.

[Argument:—Error leads to destruction, 1—Grace leads to peace, 17—Its direction despised, 32—The self-complacent Pharisee, 44—The humble Christian, 66—The Hermit and the Bramin, 79—A sanctimonious prude, 131—A saint, 171—The Christian's freedom, 197—The Gospel the sinner's refuge, 238—False grounds of peace, 283—Voltaire, 301—The believing cottager, 317—Not many rich called, 337—Poverty the best soil for the Gospel, 361—What man is, and what he thinks himself, 383—The unbelieving suicide, 429—Scripture the cure of woe, 451—Pride hostile to truth, 463—Dangers of rejecting the Gospel, 503—Plea for the conscientious heathen, 515—Terrors of the Law, 547—The Judgment Day, 563—Humility crowned; faith triumphant, 571.]

Man on the dubious waves of error tossed,
His ship half foundered, and his compass lost,
Sees, far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land;
Spreads all his canvass, every sinew plies,
Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies.
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well built systems, philosophic dreams;
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell!
He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell.

Hard lot of man, to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it! Wherefore hard?
He that would win the race, must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course;

Else, though unequalled to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way; if you choose the wrong,
Take it and perish; but restrain your tongue:
Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.
  Oh how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile,
From ostentation, as from weakness, free,
It stands, like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quickening words—BELIEVE AND LIVE.
Too many, shocked at what should charm them most,
Despise the plain direction, and are lost.
'Heaven on such terms!' they cry with proud disdain,
'Incredible, impossible, and vain!'—
Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey,
And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.
These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
Some thought of immortality remains;
The rest too busy, or too gay, to wait
On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
Sport for a day, and perish in a night,
The foam upon the waters not so light.
  Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
Had he seduced a virgin, wronged a friend,
Or stabbed a man to serve some private end?
Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
From the strict duties of the sacred day?
Sit long and late at the carousing board?
(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord)
No—the man's morals were exact; what then?

'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
His virtues were his pride; and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.
The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see—
Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he!
Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold;
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step were governed by his ear,
And seems to say—'Ye meaner fowl, give place;
I am all splendour, dignity, and grace!'
Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he too has a glory in his plumes.
He, Christianlike, retreats with modest mien
To the close copse, or far sequestered green,
And shines without desiring to be seen.
The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain;
Not more affronted by avowed neglect,
Than by the mere dissembler's feigned respect.
What is all righteousness that men devise,
What, but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
As stoop from Heaven to sell the proud a throne.
His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
Book, beads, and maple dish, his meagre stock,
In shirt of hair, and weeds of canvass dressed,
Girt with a bell-rope that the pope has blessed,
Adust with stripes told out for every crime,
And sore tormented long before his time,
His prayer preferred to saints that cannot aid,
His praise postponed, and never to be paid,
See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,
With all that bigotry adopts, inspired,
Wearing out life in his religious whim,
Till his religious whimsy wears out him.

His works, his abstinence, his zeal allowed,
You think him humble—God accounts him proud;
High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
Have purchased Heaven, and prove my title good.
Turn eastward now, and Fancy shall apply
To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
The Bramin kindles on his own bare head
The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade;
His voluntary pains, severe and long,
Would give a barbarous air to British song;
No grand inquisitor could worse invent,
Than he contrives to suffer well content.
Which is the saintlier worthy of the two?
'Past all dispute, your anchorite,' say you.
Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name?
I say the Bramin has the fairer claim.
If sufferings Scripture no where recommends,
Devised by self to answer selfish ends,
Give saintship, then all Europe must agree,
Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.
The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
And prejudice have left a passage clear)
Pride has attained its most luxuriant growth,
And poisoned every virtue in them both.
Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean;
Humility may clothe an English Dean;
That grace was Cowper's—his, confessed by all—
Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.
Not all the plenty of a Bishop's board,
His palace, and his lacqueys, and 'My Lord,'
More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice;
It thrives in misery, and abundant grows:
In misery fools upon themselves impose.
But why before us Protestants produce
An Indian mystic, or a French recluse,

Their sin is plain, but what have we to fear,
Reformed and well instructed? You shall hear.
  Yon ancient prude, whose withered features show
She might be young some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eyebrows arched, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchiefed neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet head and mincing airs,
Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
She yet allows herself that boy behind;
The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages yet are doomed to share,
Carries her Bible tucked beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.
  She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and, *item*, goes to church.
Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
Who spanned her waist, and who, where'er he came,
Scrawled upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name;
Who stole her slipper, filled it with Tokay,
And drank the little bumper every day.
Of temper as envenomed as an asp,
Censorious, and her every word a wasp,
In faithful memory she records the crimes,
Or real, or fictitious, of the times,
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.
  Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
Of malice fed while flesh is mortified:

Take, Madam, the reward of all your prayers,
Where hermits and where Bramins meet with theirs;
Your portion is with them; nay, never frown,
But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.
  Artist, attend! your brushes and your paint—
Produce them—take a chair—now draw a Saint.
Oh sorrowful and sad! the streaming tears
Channel her cheeks, a Niobe appears.
Is this a Saint? Throw tints and all away.
True Piety is cheerful as the day,
Will weep indeed, and heave a pitying groan,
For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.
  What purpose has the King of Saints in view?
Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew?
To call up Plenty from the teeming earth,
Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth?
Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
From servile fear, or be the more enslaved?
To loose the links that galled mankind before,
Or bind them faster on, and add still more?
The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
Or, if a chain, the golden one of love;
No Fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.
Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,
Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought.
His master's interest and his own combined,
Prompt every movement of his heart and mind;
Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.
  Man's obligations infinite, of course
His life should prove that he perceives their force;
His utmost he can render is but small,
The principle and motive all in all.
You have two servants,—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,
Genteel in figure, easy in address,
Moves without noise, and swift as an express,

Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
Expert in all the duties of his place;
Say, on what hinge does his obedience move?
Has he a world of gratitude and love?
No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play;
He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay;
Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
Tom quits you, with—'Your most obedient, Sir.'
The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
Watches your eye, anticipates command,
Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail,
And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;
Consults all day your interest and your ease,
Richly rewarded if he can but please,
And, proud to make his firm attachment known,
To save your life would nobly risk his own.
Now which stands highest in your serious thought?
'Charles, without doubt,' say you—and so he ought;
One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.
Thus Heaven approves, as honest and sincere,
The work of generous love and filial fear,
But, with averted eyes, the omniscient Judge,
Scorns the base hireling, and the slavish drudge.
'Where dwell these matchless saints?' old Curio cries.
Even at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
The favoured few—the enthusiasts you despise,
And, pleased at heart, because on holy ground
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
Reproach a people with his single fall,
And cast his filthy raiment at them all.
Attend;—an apt similitude shall show,
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.
See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
Shakes it again, and faster, to the ground;
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,

Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.
Ere yet it came, the traveller urged his steed,
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed;
Now drenched throughout, and hopeless of his case,
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
Suppose, unlooked for in a scene so rude,
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dressed,
By some kind, hospitable heart possessed,
Offer him warmth, security, and rest;
Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
He hears the tempest howling in the trees;
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
While danger passed is turned to present joy.
So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels;
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
Lashed into foaming waves, begins to roar;
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong,
Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
And death or restitution is the word;
The last impossible, he fears the first,
And having well deserved, expects the worst.
Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home;
Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come!
Crush me, ye rocks; ye falling mountains, hide,
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide!
The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
I dare not—'And you need not,' God replies;
'The remedy you want I freely give;
The book shall teach you; read, believe, and live!'
'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore,
And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
A soul redeemed demands a life of praise,
Hence the complexion of his future days,

Hence a demeanour holy and unspecked,
And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.
Some lead a life unblameable and just,
Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust:
They never sin—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
A slight gratuity atones for all.
For though the Pope has lost his interest here,
And pardons are not sold as once they were,
No Papist more desirous to compound,
Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
Mercy is infinite, and man is weak;
The future shall obliterate the past,
And heaven, no doubt, shall be their home at last.
Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear—
He has no hope who never had a fear;
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.
The path to bliss abounds with many a snare;
Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
The Frenchman first in literary fame,
('Mention him if you please;—Voltaire?'—'The same.')
With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied,
Lived long, wrote much, laughed heartily, and died;
The Scripture was his jest book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew;
An infidel in health;—'But what when sick?'
Oh, then, a text would touch him at the quick!
View him at Paris in his last career,
Surrounding throngs the demigod revere,
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
And fumed with frankincense on every side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And smothered in't at last, is praised to death.
Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,

Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night,
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise, but, though her lot be such,
(Toilsome and indigent), she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,
And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He, praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She, never heard of half a mile from home;
He, lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers.
  Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science, win one inch of heavenly ground;
And is it not a mortifying thought,
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?
No;—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret;
Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer,
Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there.
  Not that the Former of us all in this,
Or aught He does, is governed by caprice;
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so; the silver trumpet's heavenly call
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all;
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they;
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead, preponderating weight,
That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem)
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.

'Tis open, and ye cannot enter—why?
'Because ye will not,' Conyers would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
O blessed effect of penury and want,
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head;
To them, the sounding jargon of the schools
Seems what it is, a cap and bells for fools;
The light they walk by, kindled from above,
Shows them the shortest way to life and love;
They, strangers to the controversial field,
Where deists, always foiled, yet scorn to yield,
And never checked by what impedes the wise
Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.
Envy, ye great, the dull unlettered small,
Ye have much cause for envy—but not all;
We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet and prays;
Like gleanings of an olive tree they show
Here and there one upon the topmost bough.
How readily, upon the Gospel plan,
That question has its answer—What is man?
Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch,
An instrument whose chords, upon the stretch,
And strained to the last screw that he can bear,
Yield only discord in his Maker's ear;
Once the blest residence of truth divine,
Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
Where, in his own oracular abode,
Dwelt visibly the light-creating God,
But made long since, like Babylon of old,
A den of mischiefs never to be told:
And she, once mistress of the realms around,
Now scattered wide, and no where to be found,

As soon shall rise and reascend the throne,
By native power and energy her own,
As Nature, at her own peculiar cost,
Restore to man the glories he has lost.
Go, bid the winter cease to chill the year,
Replace the wandering comet in his sphere,
Then boast (but wait for that unhoped-for hour)
The self-restoring arm of human power.
But what is man in his own proud esteem?
Hear him, himself the poet and the theme,
A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
His mind his kingdom, and his will his law,
Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God!
So sings he, charmed with his own mind and form,
The song magnificent, the theme a worm!
Himself so much the source of his delight,
His Maker has no beauty in his sight.
See where he sits, contemplative and fixed,
Pleasure and wonder in his features mixed,
His passions tamed, and all at his control,
How perfect the composure of his soul!
Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
O'er all his thoughts, and swelled his easy sail:
His books well trimmed, and in the gayest style,
Like regimented coxcombs rank and file,
Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
And teach him notions splendid as themselves:
The Bible only stands neglected there,
Though that of all most worthy of his care,
And, like an infant, troublesome awake,
Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.
What shall the man deserve of humankind,
Whose happy skill and industry combined
Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
The Bible an imposture and a cheat?

The praises of the libertine profęssed,
The worst of men, and curses of the best.
Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes,
The dying, trembling at the awful close;
Where the betrayed, forsaken, and oppressed,
The thousands whom the world forbids to rest,
Where should they find (those comforts at an end
The Scripture yields) or hope to find, a friend?
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
Bury herself in solitude profound,
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife;
The jury meet, the coroner is short,
And lunacy the verdict of the court.
Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
Such lunacy is ignorance alone;
They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
That Scripture is the only cure of woe;
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road!
The soul reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.
But the same word that, like the polished share,
Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,
That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
O that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
Sad messenger of mercy from above,
How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear!
His will and judgment at continual strife,
That civil war embitters all his life;
In vain he points his powers against the skies,
In vain he closes or averts his eyes,

Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware;
And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.
Though various foes against the Truth combine,
Pride above all opposes her design;
Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,
Swells at the thought, and kindling into rage,
Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.
'And is the soul indeed so lost,'—she cries,
'Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise,
Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,
Has she no spark that may be deemed her own?
Grant her indebted to what zealots call
Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all;
Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
Some love of virtue, and some power to praise;
Can lift herself above corporeal things,
And soaring on her own unborrowed wings,
Possess herself of all that's good or true,
Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
Past indiscretion is a venial crime,
And if the youth, unmellowed yet by time,
Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,
Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
And meliorate the well concocted juice.
Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,
To Justice she may make her bold appeal,
And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,
The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.'
Hear then how Mercy, slighted and defied,
Retorts the affront against the crown of Pride.
'Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.
The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought
Is not for you—the righteous need it not.
Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,

Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn;
The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee.
Of all that Wisdom dictates this the drift,
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.'
'Is virtue then, unless of Christian growth,
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both?
Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
For ignorance of what they could not know?
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.'
'Truly, not I! The partial light men have,
My creed persuades me, well employed, may save;
While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,
Shall find the blessing unimproved, a curse.
Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
Left sensuality and dross behind,
Possess for me their undisputed lot,
And take unenvied the reward they sought,
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
Derived from the same source of light and grace,
That guides the Christian in his swifter race;
Their judge was Conscience, and her rule their law;
That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,
Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow,
From what they knew, to what they wished to know.
But let not him that shares a brighter day
Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,
Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
And deem his base stupidity no crime;
The wretch who slights the bounty of the skies,
And sinks, while favoured with the means to rise,
Shall find them rated at their full amount,
The good he scorned, all carried to account.'

Marshalling all his terrors as he came,
Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,
From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,
Life for obedience, death for every flaw.
When the great Sovereign would his will express,
He gives a perfect rule—what can He less?
And guards it with a sanction as severe
As Vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear:
Else his own glorious rights He would disclaim,
And man might safely trifle with his name.
He bids him glow with unremitting love
To all on Earth, and to Himself above;
Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous tongue,
The thought that meditates a brother's wrong;
Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.
Hark! universal Nature shook and groaned;
'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthroned!
Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
What! silent? Is your boasting heard no more?
That self-renouncing wisdom, learned before,
Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
That all your virtues cannot purchase now.
All joy to the believer! He can speak—
Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.
'Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine;
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;
Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart;
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good;
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon Thee;

While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now.'
  Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crowned, and Faith receives the prize.

EXPOSTULATION.

'Tantane, tam patiens nullo certamine tolli
Dona sines?'

VIRG. [Æn. v. 390].

[ARGUMENT :—Why should the Muse weep for England? 1—State of Israel when the Prophet wept for her, 33—The Babylonian Captivity, 73—National decline commences in the Church, 95—State of the Jews at Messiah's advent, 123—Privileges of the Jews, 161—Causes of their downfall and dispersion, 213—Warning from their history to Britain, 241—Her sins and dangers, 272—Adverse events ordered by Providence, 310—The nation is called to self-judgment, 340—Her ambition and vain-glory, 346—Her conduct to India, 364—Abuse of the Sacrament, 376—Hypocritical fasts, 390—Character of the Clergy, 438—Of the people, 450—State of the ancient Briton, 466—The Roman power beneficial, 474—Introduction of the Gospel, 500—Papal supremacy, 508—Subsequent blessings of Providence, 562—Reasons for gratitude, and the service of God, 644—With His favour we may defy the world, 694—The poet fears his warnings will prove in vain, 718.]

WHY weeps the Muse for England? What appears
In England's case to move the Muse to tears?
From side to side of her delightful isle,
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?
Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer
A new-found luxury, not seen in her?
Where under Heaven is Pleasure more pursued,
Or where does cold Reflection less intrude?
Her fields, a rich expanse of wavy corn,
Poured out from Plenty's overflowing horn;
Ambrosial gardens, in which Art supplies
The fervour and the force of Indian skies;

Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits
To pour his golden tide through all her gates,
Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice
Of eastern groves, and oceans floored with ice,
Forbid in vain to push his daring way
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day;
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
From the world's girdle to the frozen pole;
The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets;
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports;
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again;
All speak her happy:—let the Muse look round
From East to West, no sorrow can be found,
Or only what in cottages confined,
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.
Then wherefore weep for England? What appears
In England's case to move the Muse to tears?
The prophet wept for Israel; wished his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies;
For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong;
There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue,
Oaths used as playthings or convenient tools,
As Interest biased knaves, or Fashion fools;
Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door;
Oppression, labouring hard to grind the poor;
The partial balance and deceitful weight;
The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate;
Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
And the dull service of the lip were there;
Her women, insolent and self-caressed,
By Vanity's unwearied finger dressed,
Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart
To modest cheeks, and borrowed one from Art;
Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce;

Curled, scented, furbelowed, and flounced around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
They stretched the neck, and rolled the wanton eye,
And sighed for every fool that fluttered by.
He saw his people slaves to every lust,
Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust;
He heard the wheels of an avenging God
Groan heavily along the distant road;
Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass
To let the military deluge pass;
Jerusalem a prey, her glory soiled,
Her princes captive, and her treasures spoiled;
Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
Stamped with his foot, and smote upon his thigh,
But wept, and stamped, and smote his thigh, in vain;
Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
Ears long accustomed to the pleasing lute:
They scorned his inspiration, and his theme,
Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream,
With self-indulgence winged the fleeting hours,
Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.
Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
Till penitence had purged the public stain,
And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,
Returned them happy to the land they loved;
There, proof against prosperity, awhile
They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
And had the grace in scenes of peace to show,
The virtue they had learned in scenes of woe.
But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain,
And after all the joys that Plenty leads,
With tiptoe-step Vice silently succeeds.
When He that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,
In form a man, in dignity a God,
Came, not expected in that humble guise,
To sift and search them with unerring eyes,

He found, concealed beneath a fair outside,
The filth of rottenness and worm of pride,
Their piety a system of deceit,
Scripture employed to sanctify the cheat,
The pharisee the dupe of his own art,
Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.
When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins:
The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere,
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink;
Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
Infuses lies and errors of his own:
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,
And, tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a general rot.
Then Truth is hushed, that Heresy may preach,
And all is trash that Reason cannot reach;
Then God's own image on the soul impressed
Becomes a mockery and a standing jest;
And Faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,
Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounced by greybeards a pernicious dream:
Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth,
While truths on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend;
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand,
Happy to fill Religion's vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.
Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were;
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
And import, of their oracles divine,

Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
And yet exalted above God's own word,
They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puffed up with gifts they never understood.
He judged them with as terrible a frown,
As if not Love, but Wrath, had brought Him down:
Yet He was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs;
Through all He spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man,
And tricks and turns, that Fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.
The astonished vulgar trembled, while He tore
The mask from faces never seen before;
He stripped the impostors in the noonday sun,
Showed that they followed all they seemed to shun;
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept;
The Temple and its holy rites profaned
By mummeries He that dwelt in it disdained;
Uplifted hands, that, at convenient times,
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Washed with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from every taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
When Obstinacy once has conquered Grace.
They saw distemper healed, and life restored,
In answer to the fiat of his word,
Confessed the wonder, and with daring tongue,
Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.
They knew, by sure prognostics seen on high,
The future tone and temper of the sky,
But, grave dissemblers! could not understand,
That Sin let loose speaks Punishment at hand.

Ask now of History's authentic page,
And call up evidence from every age;
Display with busy and laborious hand
The blessings of the most indebted land;

What nation will you find, whose annals prove
So rich an interest in Almighty love?
Where dwell they now? Where dwelt in ancient day,
A people planted, watered, blest as they?
Let Egypt's plagues, and Canaan's woes proclaim
The favours poured upon the Jewish name,
Their freedom purchased for them, at the cost
Of all their hard oppressors valued most;
Their title to a country not their own,
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown;
For them, the states they left made waste and void,
For them, the states to which they went destroyed;
A cloud, to measure out their march by day,
By night a fire, to cheer the gloomy way;
That moving signal summoning, when best,
Their host to move, and when it stayed, to rest.
For them, the rocks dissolved into a flood,
The dews condensed into angelic food,
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
And Time forbid to touch them as he flew;
Streams swelled above the bank, enjoined to stand,
While they passed through to their appointed land;
Their leader armed with meekness, zeal, and love,
And graced with clear credentials from above;
Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing;
Their God their captain, lawgiver, and king;
Crowned with a thousand victories, and at last,
Lords of the conquered soil, there rooted fast,
In peace possessing what they won by war,
Their name far published, and revered as far;
Where will you find a race like theirs, endowed
With all that man e'er wished, or Heaven bestowed?
They, and they only, amongst all mankind,
Received the transcript of the Eternal Mind;
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of his cause;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs, by birth, the Saviour of us all.

In vain the nations, that had seen them rise,
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By power divine, and skill that could not err.
Had they maintained allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome;
And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurled
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But Grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.
Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol-god, within;
Viewed a deliverer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state;
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nailed it to the tree;
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flower of Israel's infamy full blown;
Thence date their sad declension, and their fall,
Their woes, not yet repealed, thence date them all.
Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favoured land, look where we may.
Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes
Had poured the day, and cleared the Roman skies;
In other climes perhaps creative Art,
With power surpassing theirs, performed her part,
Might give more life to marble, or might fill
The glowing tablets with a juster skill,
Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes
With all the embroidery of poetic dreams;
'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan
That Truth and Mercy had revealed to man;
And while the world beside, that plan unknown,
Deified useless wood or senseless stone,
They breathed in faith their well directed prayers,
And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first;
They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
'Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn!
If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
Peeled, scattered, and exterminated thus;
If Vice received her retribution due,
When we were visited, what hope for you?
When God arises, with an awful frown,
To punish lust, or pluck presumption down;
When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,
Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand,
To pour down wrath upon a thankless land,
He will be found impartially severe,
Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.'
O Israel, of all nations most undone!
Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone;
Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,
And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst;
Thy services, once holy without spot,
Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;
Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
And thou thyself o'er every country sown,
With none on earth that thou canst call thine own;
Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,
Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust,
Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears,
Say Wrath is coming, and the storm appears,
But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.
What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar
And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?
Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas,
Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
Friendship and truth to others, findest thou none?
Thou that hast set the persecuted free,

None interposes now to succour thee.
Countries indebted to thy power, that shine
With light derived from thee, would smother thine;
Thy very children watch for thy disgrace,
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face;
Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear,
As if, like arches built with skilful hand,
The more 'twere pressed the firmer it would stand.
The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
'Speed us away to battle and to fame!'
Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France,
But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
Return ashamed, without the wreaths they sought.
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war,
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight;
Where Obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what Policy has planned;
Where Policy is busied, all night long,
In setting right what Faction has set wrong;
Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
Thy racked inhabitants repine, complain,
Taxed till the brow of Labour sweats in vain;
War lays a burden on the reeling state,
And Peace does nothing to relieve the weight;
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.
Is adverse Providence, when pondered well,
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
Thou canst not read, with readiness and ease,
Providence adverse in events like these?
Know then, that Heavenly Wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all;
That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man,

Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine.
Blind to the working of that secret Power
That balances the wings of every hour,
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
States thrive or wither, as moons wax and wane,
E'en as his will and his decrees ordain;
While Honour, Virtue, Piety, bear sway,
They flourish; and, as these decline, decay.
In just resentment of his injured laws,
He pours contempt on them, and on their cause;
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of every scheme they have at heart;
Bids rottenness invade, and bring to dust,
The pillars of support in which they trust,
And do his errand of disgrace and shame,
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what He wrought,
None bars Him out from his most secret thought,
Darkness itself before his eye is light,
And Hell's close mischief naked in his sight.
Stand now and judge thyself.—Hast thou incurred
His anger who can waste thee with a word,
Who poises and proportions sea and land,
Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,
And in whose awful sight all nations seem
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?
Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
Claimed all the glory of thy prosperous wars?
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
Of his just praise, to lavish it on them?
Hast thou not learned, what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
That no success attends on spears and swords
Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's?
That Courage is his creature; and Dismay

The post that at his bidding speeds away,
Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue
With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,
To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
And teach the combatant a woman's part?
That He bids thousands fly when none pursue,
Saves as He will, by many or by few,
And claims for ever, as his royal right,
The event and sure decision of the fight?
Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,
Exported slavery to the conquered East?
Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?
Gone thither armed and hungry, returned full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power obtained by wealth,
And that obtained by rapine and by stealth?
With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind,
And having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?
Hast thou, by statute, shoved from its design,
The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office key, a picklock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good,
By an oath dipped in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write,
And though a Bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look within?
Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with disgrace,
And long provoked, repaid thee to thy face,
(For thou hast known eclipses, and endured

Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
When Sin has shed dishonour on thy brow,
And never of a sabler hue than now)
Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience seared,
Despising all rebuke, still persevered,
And having chosen evil, scorned the voice
That cried 'Repent!'—and gloried in thy choice?
Thy fastings, when calamity at last
Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast,
What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a power
In lighter diet at a later hour,
To charm to sleep the threatening of the skies,
And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?
The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends
The stroke that a vindictive God intends,
Is to renounce hypocrisy; to draw
Thy life upon the pattern of the law;
To war with pleasure, idolized before;
To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
Is wooing mercy by renewed offence.
  Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time
Brought fire from Heaven, the sex-abusing crime,
Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace
Baboons are free from, upon human race?
Think on the fruitful and well watered spot,
That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
Where Paradise seemed still vouchsafed on earth,
Burning and scorched into perpetual dearth,
Or, in his words who damned the base desire,
'Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;'
Then Nature, injured, scandalized, defiled,
Unveiled her blushing cheek, looked on, and smiled;
Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,
And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.
  Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
And farther still the formed and fixed design,
To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest

Against an innocent, unconscious breast;
The man that dares traduce, because he can
With safety to himself, is not a man.
An individual is a sacred mark,
Not to be pierced in play, or in the dark,
But public censure speaks a public foe,
Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.
  The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
From mean self-interest and ambition clear,
Their hope in Heaven, servility their scorn,
Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,
Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love,
As meek as the man Moses, and withal
As bold as, in Agrippa's presence, Paul,
Should fly the World's contaminating touch,
Holy and unpolluted:—are thine such?
Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.
  Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,
For ears and hearts that he can hope to please?
'Look to the poor; the simple and the plain
Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain:
Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
Speak but the word, will listen and return.'
Alas, not so! the poorest of the flock
Are proud, and set their faces as a rock;
Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
God's better gift they scoff at, and refuse.
'The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
Are more intelligent at least,—try them.'
Oh vain inquiry! they without remorse
Are altogether gone a devious course,
Where beckoning Pleasure leads them, wildly stray,
Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.
  Now borne upon the wings of Truth sublime,
Review thy dim original and prime.
This island spot of unreclaimed rude earth,

The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
Was rocked by many a rough Norwegian blast,
And Danish howlings scared thee as they passed;
For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
And sucked a breast that panted with alarms.
While yet thou wast a grovelling, puling chit,
Thy bones not fashioned, and thy joints not knit,
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now:
His victory was that of orient light,
When the Sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.
Thy language at this distant moment shows
How much the country to the conqueror owes;
Expressive, energetic, and refined,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind.
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame;
Taught thee to clothe thy pinked and painted hide,
And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride;
He sowed the seeds of order where he went,
Improved thee far beyond his own intent,
And while he ruled thee by the sword alone,
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
Needs only to be seen to be admired;
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,
Was formed to harden hearts and shock the sight;
Thy Druids struck the well strung harps they bore,
With fingers deeply dyed in human gore;
And while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the tolling chords rung out his dying breath.
Who brought the lamp that with awakening beams
Dispelled thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
Tradition, now decrepid and worn out,
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt:
But still light reached thee; and those gods of thine,
Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
Fell broken and defaced at their own door,

As Dagon in Philistia long before.
But Rome, with sorceries and magic wand,
Soon raised a cloud that darkened every land;
And thine was smothered in the stench and fog
Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog.
Then priests with bulls, and briefs, and shaven crowns,
And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
Legates, and delegates, with powers from hell,
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well;
And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind:
Thy soldiery, the Pope's well managed pack,
Were trained beneath his lash, and knew the smack,
And when he laid them on the scent of blood,
Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,
That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
His worthless absolution all the prize.
Thou wast the veriest slave, in days of yore,
That ever dragged a chain, or tugged an oar;
Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
Disdained thy counsels, only in distress,
Found thee a goodly sponge for Power to press.
Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
Provoked and harassed, in return plagued thee;
Called thee away from peaceable employ,
Domestic happiness and rural joy,
To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.
Thy parliaments adored, on bended knees,
The sovereignty they were convened to please;
Whate'er was asked, too timid to resist,
Complied with, and were graciously dismissed,
And if some Spartan soul a doubt expressed,
And blushing at the tameness of the rest,
Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,

He was a traitor by the general voice.
O slave! with powers thou didst not dare exert,
Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert;
It shakes the sides of splenetic Disdain,
Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,
That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee;
When other nations flew from coast to coast,
And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.
Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust;
Blush, if thou canst; not petrified, thou must:
Act but an honest and a faithful part;
Compare what then thou wast, with what thou art;
And God's disposing providence confessed,
Obduracy itself must yield the rest—
Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove,
Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.
  Has he not hid thee, and thy favoured land,
For ages safe beneath his sheltering hand,
Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof,
Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof,
And charged Hostility and Hate to roar
Where else they would, but not upon thy shore?
His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain
Baptized her fleet Invincible in vain;
Her gloomy monarch, doubtful, and resigned
To every pang that racks an anxious mind,
Asked of the waves that broke upon his coast,
'What tidings?' and the surge replied—'All lost!'
And when the Stuart, leaning on the Scot,
Then too much feared, and now too much forgot,
Pierced to the very centre of the realm,
And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
'Twas but to prove how quickly, with a frown,
He that had raised thee, could have plucked thee down.
Peculiar is the grace by thee possessed,
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,

And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,
Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
While his own heaven surveys the troubled scene,
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;
Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays,
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
True freedom is where no restraint is known
That Scripture, Justice, and Good Sense disown;
Where only Vice and Injury are tied,
And all from shore to shore is free beside.
Such freedom is;—and Windsor's hoary towers
Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,
That won a nymph on that immortal plain,
Like her the fabled Phœbus wooed in vain:
He found the laurel only—happier you,
The unfading laurel, and the virgin too!
Now think, if Pleasure have a thought to spare,
If God himself be not beneath her care,
If Business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause one hour to read a serious rhyme,
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
Or expectation of the next, give leave,
Oh think, if chargeable with deep arrears
For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,
The beams of heavenly truth have swelled the debt!
When persecuting zeal made royal sport
With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
Enjoyed the show, and danced about the stake;
The Sacred Book, its value understood,
Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
Seem to reflection of a different race,
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,

In such a cause they could not dare to fear;
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
Nor spare a life too short to reach the skies.
From them to thee, conveyed along the tide,
Their streaming hearts poured freely when they died;
Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
What dotage will not Vanity maintain?
What web too weak to catch a modern brain?
The moles and bats in full assembly find,
On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.
And did they dream, and art thou wiser now?
Prove it;—if better, I submit and bow.
Wisdom and Goodness are twin-born, one heart
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.
So then;—as darkness overspread the deep,
Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,
And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
Leaped out of nothing, called by the Most High;
By such a change, thy darkness is made light,
Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might;
And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,
Who found thee nothing, formed thee for his praise.
To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,
Doing and suffering, his unquestioned will;
'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,
Faithful, and faithfully informed, unfold;
Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
To take for truth what cannot but be true,
To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
And bind the task assigned thee to thine heart;
Happy the man there seeking and there found,
Happy the nation where such men abound!
  How shall a verse impress thee? By what name
Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame?
By theirs whose bright example, unimpeached,
Directs thee to that eminence they reached,
Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires?

Or his, who touched their hearts with hallowed fires?
Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age,
Whom all the vanities they scorned engage;
And his that seraphs tremble at, is hung
Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue,
Or serves the champion in forensic war,
To flourish and parade with at the bar.
Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
If Interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee;
By every charm that smiles upon her face,
By joys possessed, and joys still held in chase,
If dear society be worth a thought,
And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
Held by the tenure of his will alone,
Like angels in the service of their Lord,
Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word;
That gratitude and temperance in our use
Of what He gives, unsparing and profuse,
Secure the favour, and enhance the joy,
That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.
But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er
Those rights that millions envy thee appear,
And though resolved to risk them, and swim down
The tide of pleasure, heedless of his frown,
That blessings truly sacred, and when given,
Marked with the signature and stamp of Heaven,
The word of prophecy, those truths divine,
Which make that Heaven, if thou desire it, thine
(Awful alternative! believed, beloved,
Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved)
Are never long vouchsafed, if pushed aside
With cold disgust or philosophic pride;
And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
Error, and darkness occupy their place.
A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
Not quickly found, if negligently sought,
Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,

Endurest the brunt, and darest defy them all;
And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise
A bolder still, a contest with the skies?
Remember, if He guard thee and secure,
Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure;
But if He leave thee, though the skill and power
Of nations, sworn to spoil thee and devour,
Were all collected in thy single arm,
And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,
That strength would fail, opposed against the push
And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.
Say not (and if the thought of such defence
Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)
What nation amongst all my foes is free,
From crimes as base as any charged on me?
Their measure filled, they too shall pay the debt,
Which God, though long forborn, will not forget.
But know, that Wrath Divine, when most severe,
Makes Justice still the guide of his career,
And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,
Them without light, and thee without a cloud.
Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;
And while, at intervals, a cold blast sings
Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.
I know the warning song is sung in vain,
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain,
But if a sweeter voice, and one designed
A blessing to my country and mankind,
Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home
A flock so scattered, and so wont to roam,
Then place it once again between my knees,
The sound of truth will then be sure to please,
And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
In scenes of plenty or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

HOPE.

doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.'—VIRG. Æn. vi. 109.

[ARGUMENT:—Views of human life, 1—Nature, always the same, though seeming different in youth and age, 27—Frivolity of fashionable life, 75—Value of life, 115—God's attributes known from His works, 133—Nature the handmaid of Grace, 145—Character of Hope, 152—Corruption of human nature, 179—Shown at different periods of life, 197—Honours paid to the dead, 260—Each man's belief right in his own eyes, 276—Only one way right, 302—Men disdain the terms on which God offers eternal life, 322—Vague ideas on this subject, 357—Spread of the Gospel, 439—The Moravian missions to Greenland, 465—Contrast of unconverted and converted heathen, 495—Whitefield, 554—The man of pleasure the greatest of bigots, 594—Any hope preferred to that of the Gospel, 614—Apostrophe to Truth, 663—The sinner convicted, 674—Pardoned, 710—Works of truth imperishable, 742].

ASK what is human life—the sage replies,
With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive, false good,
A scene of fancied bliss and heart-felt care,
Closing at last in darkness and despair.
The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
And no where, but in feigned Arcadian scenes,
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means,
Riches are passed away from hand to hand,
As fortune, vice, or folly may command;
As in a dance the pair that take the lead
Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,

So shifting and so various is the plan
By which Heaven rules the mixed affairs of man;
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud;
Business is labour, and man's weakness such,
Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much;
The very sense of it foregoes its use,
By repetition palled, by age obtuse.
Youth lost in dissipation, we deplore,
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore;
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.
  Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff,
Lothario cries, 'What philosophic stuff!'
O querulous and weak!—whose useless brain
Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain;
Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste;
Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renewed desire would grace with other speech
Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.
  'For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
See Nature gay as when she first began,
With smiles alluring her admirer, man;
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils,
The sun, obedient, at her call appears,
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears,
Banks clothed with flowers, groves filled with sprightly sounds,
The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field
Where'er they flow, now seen and now concealed;
From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet,
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,

Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes,
All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, "Rejoice!"
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires;
Not that his hours devoted all to Care,
Hollow-eyed Abstinence, and lean Despair,
The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,
She holds a Paradise of rich delight,
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives she gives sincere,
To banish hesitation, and proclaim
His happiness, her dear, her only aim.
'Tis grave Philosophy's absurdest dream,
That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem,
That only shadows are dispensed below,
And earth has no reality but woe.'
Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,
As youth or age persuades, and neither true;
So Flora's wreath through coloured crystal seen,
The rose or lily appears blue or green,
But still the imputed tints are those alone
The medium represents, and not their own.
To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undressed,
To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
To fill the dull vacuity till four;
And just when evening turns the blue vault grey,
To spend two hours in dressing for the day;
To make the sun a bauble without use,
Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce,
Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not;
Through mere necessity to close his eyes
Just when the larks, and when the shepherds, rise;
Is such a life, so tediously the same,
So void of all utility or aim,
That poor Jonquil, with almost every breath,

Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death;
For he, with all his follies, has a mind,
Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
Of distant wisdom shoots across his way,
By which he reads, that life without a plan,
As useless as the moment it began,
Serves merely as a soil for discontent
To thrive in; an incumbrance ere half spent.
O weariness beyond what asses feel,
That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel!
A dull rotation, never at a stay,
Yesterday's face twin image of to-day,
While conversation, an exhausted stock,
Grows drowsy, as the clicking of a clock.
'No need,' he cries, 'of gravity, stuffed out
With academic dignity devout,
To read wise lectures, vanity the text;
Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next;
For truth self-evident, with pomp impressed,
Is vanity surpassing all the rest.'

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
Yet seldom sought where only to be found,
While Passion turns aside from its due scope
The inquirer's aim, that remedy, is HOPE.
Life is his gift, from whom whate'er life needs,
With every good and perfect gift, proceeds;
Bestowed on man, like all that we partake,
Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake;
Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
And yet the seed of an immortal flower,
Designed, in honour of his endless love,
To fill with fragrance his abode above;
No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
And, howsoever shadowy, no dream;
Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.

Men deal with life as children with their play,

Who first misuse, then cast their toys away,
Live to no sober purpose, and contend,
That their Creator had no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, power and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above,
To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.
If, led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not his august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature, employed in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of grace,
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood:
That bliss, revealed in scripture, with a glow
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.
  Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deemed substantial since the fall.
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives, with chemic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wing sails through the immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,

With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.
Hope! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights, in thee.
Had he the gems, the spices, and the land
That boasts the treasure, all at his command,
The fragrant grove, the inestimable mine,
Were light, when weighed against one smile of thine.
Though, clasped and cradled in his nurse's arms,
He shine with all a cherub's artless charms,
Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt;
His passions, like the watery stores that sleep
Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
The free republic of the whip-gig state.
If one, his equal in athletic frame,
Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
Dare step across his arbitrary views,
An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues:
The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand, prevails.
Now see him launched into the world at large;
If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
Though short, too long, the price he pays for all;
If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead,
But proudest of the worst, if that succeed;
Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees,

Punctually paid for lengthening out disease,
No COTTON, whose humanity sheds rays,
That make superior skill his second praise;
If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
His date of life, so likely to be short,
A soldier may be anything, if brave;
So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
Such stuff the world is made of; and mankind
To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resigned,
Insist on, as if each were his own pope,
Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope;
But Conscience, in some awful, silent hour,
When captivating lusts have lost their power,
Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
Reminds him of religion, hated theme!
Starts from the down on which she lately slept,
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept,
Shows with a pointing finger, but no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorned,
And life abused, and not to be suborned.
'Mark these,' she says, 'these, summoned from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the bar;
There find a judge inexorably just,
And perish there, as all presumption must.'
  Peace be to those (such peace as Earth can give)
Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live;
Born capable indeed of heavenly truth,
But down to latest age, from earliest youth,
Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
The plough of wisdom never entering there.
Peace (if insensibility may claim
A right to the meek honours of her name)
To men of pedigree, their noble race,
Emulous always of the nearest place
To any throne, except the throne of grace.
Let cottagers and unenlightened swains,
Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains,

Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,
And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there;
Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
To exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
May now and then their velvet cushions take,
And seem to pray, for good example' sake,
Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
Pious enough, and having need of none.
Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize
What they themselves, without remorse, despise:
Nor hope have they, nor fear of aught to come,
As well for them had prophecy been dumb;
They could have held the conduct they pursue,
Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew;
And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,
Is a pearl cast, completely cast, away.
They die,—Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport,
All the grim honours of his ghastly court.
Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow;
The busy heralds hang the sable scene
With mournful scutcheons, and dim lamps between,
Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
But they that wore them, move not at the sound;
The coronet, placed idly at their head,
Adds nothing now to the degraded dead,
And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier,
Can only say,—'Nobility lies here.'
Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend
By useless censure, whom we cannot mend,
Life without hope can close but in despair,
'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.
As when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
Both may be lost, yet each in his own way,
So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
In vain opinion's waste and dangerous wild;

Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong:
But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,
Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;
And he that blames what they have blindly chose,
Incurs resentment for the love he shows.
Say, botanist, within whose province fall
The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,
What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?
Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,
Distinguish every cultivated kind,
The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
If wild in nature, and not duly found,
Gethsemane! in thy dear, hallowed ground,
That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,
Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,
(Oh cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant weeds.
Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
Would give relief of bed and board to none,
But guests that sought it in the appointed ONE;
And they might enter at his open door,
Even till his spacious hall would hold no more.
He sent a servant forth by every road,
To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high, and low,
An ordinance it concerned them much to know.
If after all, some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace?

No! the decree was just and without flaw,
And he that made had right to make the law,
His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrained,
The wrong was his who wrongfully complained.
Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With him, the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which his love confirms
The largess He bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot ensures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, 'Do this, and live.'
Love is not pedler's trumpery, bought and sold;
He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not;
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful generous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can; for this plain cause, expressed
In terms as plain, himself has shut the rest.
But oh! the strife, the bickering, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased Heaven create,
The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
From stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound,
And beaus, adepts in every thing profound,
Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound;
Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
The explosion of the levelled tube excites,
Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the glade,
And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade,
The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
And seem to warn him never to repeat

His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.
'Adieu,' Vinosa cries, ere yet he sips,
The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
'Adieu to all morality, if Grace
Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
The Christian Hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
If I mistake not—Blockhead! with a fork!
Without good works, whatever some may boast,
Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes,
With nice attention in a righteous scale,
And save or damm as these or those prevail.
I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
And silence every fear with—God is just.
But if, perchance, on some dull, drizzling day,
A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
If thus the important cause is to be tried,
Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side;
I soon recover from these needless frights,
And—God is merciful—sets all to rights.
Thus between Justice, as my prime support,
And Mercy, fled to as the last resort,
I glide and steal along with heaven in view,
And—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.'
'I never will believe,' the colonel cries,
'The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
Who make the good Creator on their plan
A being of less equity than man.
If appetite, or what divines call lust,
Which men comply with e'en because they must,
Be punished with perdition, who is pure?
Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.
If sentence of eternal pain belong
To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
Then heaven enjoins the fallible and frail
A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean

By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene)
My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.'
'Right,' says an ensign, 'and for aught I see,
Your faith and mine substantially agree;
The best of every man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.
A lawyer's dealing should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there;
Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least;
A soldier's best is courage in the field,
With nothing here that wants to be concealed,
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay,
A hand as liberal as the light of day;
The soldier thus endowed, who never shrinks,
Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.
Sir Smug,' he cries (for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug,
How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug)
'Your office is to winnow false from true;
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us what think you.'
Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
'Fallible man,' the church-bred youth replies,
'Is still found fallible, however wise;
And differing judgments serve but to declare,
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read
Of critics now alive or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charmed me most
Was—welladay, the title page was lost;
The writer well remarks, a heart, that knows
To take with gratitude what heaven bestows,
With prudence always ready at our call,

To guide our use of it, is all in all.
Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store,
I superadd a few essentials more;
But these, excuse the liberty I take,
I waive just now, for conversation' sake.'
'Spoke like an oracle,' they all exclaim,
And add Right Reverend to Smug's honoured name.
And yet our lot is given us in a land
Where busy arts are never at a stand,
Where Science points her telescopic eye,
Familiar with the wonders of the sky,
Where bold Inquiry, diving out of sight,
Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light,
Where nought eludes the persevering quest,
That Fashion, Taste, or Luxury suggest.
But above all, in her own light arrayed,
See Mercy's grand apocalypse displayed!
The Sacred Book no longer suffers wrong,
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue,
But speaks with plainness art could never mend,
What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound:
That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day;
'Tis heard where England's Eastern glory shines,
And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines,
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
Her sons to pour it on the farthest north:
Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose,
On icy plains, and in eternal snows.
O blessed within the enclosure of your rocks,
Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks,
No fertilizing streams your fields divide,
That show reversed the villas on their side;
No groves have ye; nor cheerful sound of bird,

Or voice of turtle in your land is heard;
Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell;
But Winter, armed with terrors here unknown,
Sits absolute on his unshaken throne;
Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
And bids the mountains he has built, stand fast;
Beckons the legions of his storms away
From happier scenes, to make your land a prey;
Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
And scorns to share it with the distant sun.
—Yet Truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle!
And Peace the genuine offspring of her smile;
The pride of lettered ignorance, that binds
In chains of error our accomplished minds,
That decks, with all the splendour of the true,
A false religion, is unknown to you.
Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight
The sweet vicissitudes of day and night,
Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here;
But brighter beams than his who fires the skies,
Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,
That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
From which our nicer optics turn away.
Here see the encouragement Grace gives to vice,
The dire effect of Mercy without price!
What were they? What some fools are made by art,
They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach;
Not e'en the glorious sun, though men revere
The monarch most that seldom will appear,
And though his beams, that quicken where they shine,
May claim some right to be esteemed divine,
Not e'en the sun, desirable as rare,
Could bend one knee, engage one votary there;
They were, what base credulity believes

True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
The full-gorged savage, at his nauseous feast
Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,
Was one, whom Justice, on an equal plan
Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
Might also have indulged with an escape,
Chargeable only with a human shape.
What are they now?—Morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions, there;
The wretch, who once sang wildly, danced, and laughed,
And sucked in dizzy madness with his draught,
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays;
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
And he that stole has learned to steal no more.
Well spake the prophet,—'Let the desert sing,
Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,
And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
Shall grow the myrtle, and luxuriant yew.'
Go now, and with important tone demand
On what foundation virtue is to stand,
If self-exalting claims be turned adrift,
And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift;
The poor reclaimed inhabitant, his eyes
Glistening at once with pity and surprise,
Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
Of one, whose birth was in a land of light,
Shall answer;—'Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.'
These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside,
Wild as if nature there, void of all good,
Played only gambols in a frantic mood,
(Yet charge not heavenly skill with having planned
A plaything world, unworthy of his hand;)
Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
In all we touch, stamped plainly on his works;

Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.
  Hard task indeed o'er arctic seas to roam!
Is Hope exotic? Grows it not at home?
Yes, but an object bright as orient morn,
May press the eye too closely to be borne;
A distant virtue we can all confess,
It hurts our pride, and moves our envy less.
  Leuconomus (beneath well sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age;
The very butt of Slander, and the blot
For every dart that Malice ever shot.
The man that mentioned him, at once dismissed
All mercy from his lips, and sneered, and hissed;
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And Perjury stood up to swear all true;
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense;
A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule,
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was passed,
Die when he might, he must be damned at last.
  Now, Truth, perform thine office; waft aside
The curtain drawn by Prejudice and Pride,
Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.
He loved the world that hated him; the tear
That dropped upon his Bible was sincere;
Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life,
And he that forged, and he that threw, the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed;
He followed Paul, his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same;

46934

Like him, crossed cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;
Like him he laboured, and like him content
To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.
Blush, Calumny! and write upon his tomb,
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which, aimed at him, have pierced the offended skies;
And say;—'Blot out my sin, confessed, deplored,
Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord!'
No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he who must have pleasure, come what will:
He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture indeed is plain, but God and he
On Scripture ground are sure to disagree;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than this his Maker has seen fit to give,
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain,
Contrived to suit frail nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.
By this, with nice precision of design,
He draws upon life's map a zig-zag line,
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin
And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
His well poised estimate of right and wrong,
And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.
Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,
With what materials, on what ground, you please,
Your Hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
If not that Hope the Scripture has required.
The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
With which Hypocrisy for ever teems,
(Though other follies strike the public eye,
And raise a laugh) pass unmolested by;

But if, unblameable in word and thought,
A MAN arise, a man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John,
To storm the citadels they build in air,
And smite the untempered wall 'tis death to spare;
To sweep away all refuges of lies,
And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
LAMA SABACTHANI before their eyes;
To prove that without Christ all gain is loss,
All hope despair, that stands not on his cross;—
Except the few his God may have impressed,
A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
That folly ends where genuine Hope begins,
And he that finds his Heaven must lose his sins.
Nature opposes with her utmost force
This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce,
And, while religion seems to be her view,
Hates with a deep sincerity the true:
For this, of all that ever influenced man,
Since Abel worshipped, or the world began,
This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
But makes him, if at all, completely free;
Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
Of an eternal, universal war;
Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles,
Drives through the realms of Sin, where Riot reels,
And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels!
Hence all that is in man,—pride, passion, art,
Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,—
Insensible of Truth's almighty charms,
Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!
While Bigotry, with well dissembled fears,
His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
Mighty to parry and push-by God's word

With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.
  Parent of Hope, immortal Truth! make known
Thy deathless wreaths, and triumphs all thine own:
The silent progress of thy power is such,
Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
And none can teach them but whom thou hast taught.
Oh! see me sworn to serve thee, and command
A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
That while I trembling trace a work divine,
Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
And light and shade, and every stroke be thine.
  If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
If ever when he sighed, hast sighed again,
If ever on thy eyelid stood the tear
That Pity had engendered, drop one here.
This man was happy—had the World's good word,
And with it every joy it can afford;
Friendship and Love seemed tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;
Politely learned, and of a gentle race,
Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
And whether at the toilet of the fair
He laughed and trifled, made him welcome there,
Or if in masculine debate he shared,
Ensured him mute attention and regard.
Alas, how changed! Expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined;
Those awful syllables, Hell, Death, and Sin,
Though whispered, plainly tell what works within,
That conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a Doomsday sentence on his heart.
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends;
Hard task! for one who lately knew no care,
And harder still as learnt beneath despair;

His hours no longer pass unmarked away,
A dark importance saddens every day;
He hears the notice of the clock, perplexed,
And cries, 'Perhaps eternity strikes next!'
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear;
His grief the world of all her power disarms,
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms;
God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
Now by the voice of his experience true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that Hope he pants to make his own.
Now let the bright reverse be known abroad;
Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God.
As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doomed, for some atrocious cause,
Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his misspent years,
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest-usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightnings play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies:
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear,
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior Joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor, added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him whom Hope has with a touch made whole.
'Tis Heaven, all Heaven, descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings;
'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,
'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.

Oh! welcome now the sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are called to employ
Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy,
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.
These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
The scoff of withered age and beardless youth;
These move the censure and illiberal grin
Of fools that hate thee and delight in sin;
But these shall last when night has quenched the pole,
And heaven is all departed as a scroll,
And when, as Justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these thy glorious works, and they that share
That Hope which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.
Happy the bard, (if that fair name belong
To him that blends no fable with his song)
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,
And while they captivate, inform the mind;
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,
And fruit reward his honourable toil;
But happier far, who comfort those that wait
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallowed gate;
Their language simple, as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek,
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste;
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
The abundant harvest, recompense divine,
Repays their work—the gleaning only mine.

CHARITY.

'Quo nihil majus meliusve terris
Fata donavere, bonique divi;
Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum
Tempora priscum.'

HOR. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

[ARGUMENT:—Invocation to Charity, 1—Social ties, 15—Humanity of Capt. Cook, 23—Cook and Cortez contrasted, 35—Degradation of Spain, 65—Design of Commerce, 83—Gifts of Art, 97—Slave trade denounced, 137—Slavery unnatural and degrading, 155—Duty of mitigating its miseries, 218—Apostrophe to Liberty, 254—John Howard, 290—Pursuits of Philosophy, 313—Revelation the lamp to Reason, 337—Charity the offspring of Truth, 377—The optician lecturing to a blind nation, 379—Portrait of Charity, 422—Almsgiving as an opiate to the conscience, 447—Satire deprecated, 485—Works of charity alone acceptable at the Judgment Day, 557—Charity exemplified in the life of Christ, 579—Blessed effects of the universal diffusion of Charity, 604].

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait
On man's most dignified and happiest state,
Whether we name thee Charity or Love,
Chief grace below, and all in all above,
Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)
A task I venture on, impelled by thee:
Oh! never seen but in thy blest effects,
Nor felt but in the soul that Heaven selects;
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,

And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.
God, working ever on a social plan,
By various ties attaches man to man;
He made at first, though free and unconfined,
One man the common father of the kind,
That every tribe, though placed as he sees best,
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,
Differing in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust—
Steered Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own;
Wherever he found man to nature true,
The rights of man were sacred in his view;
He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,
The simple native of the new found isle;
He spurned the wretch that slighted, or withstood,
The tender argument of kindred blood,
Nor would endure that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.
But though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumbered evils meet,
To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
See Cortez odious for a world enslaved!
Where wast thou then, sweet Charity? Where then,
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men?
Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground?
No.—Mammon makes the world his legatee
Through fear, not love; and Heaven abhors the fee.
Wherever found (and all men need thy care)
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there;
The hand that slew till it could slay no more,
Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore.

Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
As vain imperial Philip on his own,
Tricked out of all his royalty by art,
That stripped him bare, and broke his honest heart,
Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,
For scorning what they taught him to detest.
How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze
Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways;
God stood not, though he seemed to stand, aloof,
And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof;
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
The fretting plague is in the public purse,
The cankered spoil corrodes the pining state,
Starved by that indolence their mines create.
  Oh! could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!
'Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we?
Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest,
To see the oppressor in his turn oppressed.
Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand
Rolled over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown?
The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,
And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.'
'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
And Vengeance executes what Justice wills.
  Again—the band of commerce was designed
To associate all the branches of mankind;
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes;

Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the general use,
No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all.
This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
Cheers what were else a universal shade,
Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rock-work into men.
  Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race,
Not only fills Necessity's demand,
But overcharges her capacious hand:
Capricious Taste itself can crave no more
Than she supplies from her abounding store:
She strikes out all that Luxury can ask,
And gains new vigour at her endless task.
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre;
From her the canvass borrows light and shade,
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade;
She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,
And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.
  These are the gifts of Art; and Art thrives most
Where Commerce has enriched the busy coast;
He catches all improvements in his flight,
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
Imports what others have invented well.
And stirs his own to match them, or excel.
'Tis thus, reciprocating each with each,
Alternately the nations learn and teach,
While Providence enjoins to every soul
A union with the vast terraqueous whole.
  Heaven speed the canvass, gallantly unfurled
To furnish and accommodate a world,
To give the pole the produce of the sun,
And knit the unsocial climates into one.

Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
Impel the fleet whose errand is to save,
To succour wasted regions, and replace
The smile of opulence in sorrow's face.
Let nothing adverse, nothing unforseen,
Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,
That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
A herald of God's love to pagan lands.
But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature, in that moment end,
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of Death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves, and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far receding shore,
But not the thought that they must meet no more;
Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
What has he left that he can yet forego?
Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resigned,
He feels his body's bondage in his mind,
Puts off his generous nature, and, to suit
His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.
O most degrading of all ills that wait
On man, a mourner in his best estate!
All other sorrows virtue may endure,
And find submission more than half a cure;
Grief is itself a medicine, and bestowed
To improve the fortitude that bears the load,
To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,
The path of wisdom, all whose paths are peace;
But slavery!—Virtue dreads it as her grave;
Patience itself is meanness in a slave:

Or if the will and sovereignty of God
Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And snap the chain the moment when you may.
Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
That has a heart and life in it, 'Be free!'
The beasts are chartered—neither age nor force
Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:
He breaks the cord that held him at the rack,
And conscious of an unincumbered back,
Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein,
Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane,
Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs,
Nor stops, till, overleaping all delays,
He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.
Canst thou, and honoured with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame?
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold;
So may the ruffian, who with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside;
Not he, but his emergence, forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.
Has God then given its sweetness to the cane,
Unless his laws be trampled on,—in vain?
Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
Unless his right to rule it be dismissed?
Impudent blasphemy! So Folly pleads,
And, Avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.
But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey, because he must;
Still there is room for pity to abate
And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton, knows, or if he knows it not,
The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
That souls have no discriminating hue,

Alike important in their Maker's view;
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And Love Divine has paid one price for all.
The wretch that works and weeps without relief
Has one that notices his silent grief.
He from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers all injustice with a frown,
But marks the man that treads his fellow down.
Begone! the whip and bell in that hard hand
Are hateful ensigns of usurped command;
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod;
To smite the poor is treason against God.
Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brooked
While life's sublimest joys are overlooked;
We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil,
Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,
Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offered shade,
Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade;
Else who would lose, that had the power to improve,
The occasion of transmuting fear to love?
Oh! 'tis a godlike privilege to save,
And he that scorns it is himself a slave.—
Inform his mind; one flash of heavenly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.
'Beauty for ashes' is a gift indeed,
And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.
Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
While Gratitude and Love made service sweet,
'My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,
Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
I was a bondman on my native plain,
Sin forged, and Ignorance made fast, the chain;
Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;
Farewell, my former joys! I sigh no more

For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;
Serving a benefactor, I am free;
At my best home, if not exiled from thee.'
Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the Bank, and throws the golden sands,
A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:
These have an ear for his paternal call,
Who makes some rich for the supply of all,
God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ,
And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.
Oh! could I worship aught beneath the skies,
That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,
Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
As ever dressed a bank, or scented summer air.
Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
The peep of morning shed a dawning light,
Again, when evening in her sober vest
Drew the grey curtain of the fading west,
My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,
For the chief blessings of my fairest days:
But that were sacrilege;—praise is not thine,
But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine:
Else I would say, and as I spake, bid fly
A captive bird into the boundless sky;—
'This triple realm adores thee;—thou art come
From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
We feel thy force still active, at this hour
Enjoy immunity from priestly power,
While Conscience, happier than in ancient years,
Owns no superior but the God she fears.
Propitious Spirit! yet expunge a wrong
Thy rights have suffered, and our land, too long,
Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts that share

The fears and hopes of a commercial care.
Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt,
But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood,
And honest Merit stands on slippery ground,
Where covert guile and artifice abound.
Let just Restraint, for public peace designed
Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind;
The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
But let insolvent innocence go free.'
Patron of else the most despised of men,
Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen;
Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed,
Should be the guerdon of a noble deed;
I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
(Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.
Blessed with all wealth can give thee, to resign
Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach;
That grief, sequestered from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage,
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
Oh that the voice of clamour and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hushed in favour of thy generous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee!
Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with Nature all his way,
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep inquiry recommends,

Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control,
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,
That cheers the silent journey of the night,
And brings, at his return, a bosom charged
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.
The treasured sweets of the capacious plan
That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new;
He too has a connecting power, and draws
Man to the centre of the common cause,
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight,
With a new medium and a purer light.
  All truth is precious, if not all divine,
And what dilates the powers must needs refine.
He reads the skies, and, watching every change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range,
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
A prouder station on the general scale.
But Reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought;
The lamp of revelation only shows,
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
That man, in Nature's richest mantle clad,
And graced with all Philosophy can add,
Though fair without, and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride;
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
Unless the power that bade him stand, restore.
This is indeed Philosophy; this known
Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own;
And without this, whatever he discuss,
Whether the space between the stars and us,
Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea,

The solemn trifler, with his boasted skill,
Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still:
Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes,
Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
Self-knowledge truly learned of course implies
The rich possession of a nobler prize;
For self to self, and God to man revealed
(Two themes to Nature's eye for ever sealed)
Are taught by rays that fly with equal pace
From the same centre of enlightening grace.
Here stay thy foot; how copious, and how clear,
The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here!
Hark! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills,
Winding a secret or an open course,
And all supplied from an eternal source.
The ties of Nature do but feebly bind,
And Commerce partially reclaims mankind;
Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,
May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride,
But while his province is the reasoning part,
Has still a veil of midnight on his heart:
'Tis Truth divine, exhibited on earth,
Gives Charity her being and her birth.
  Suppose (when thought is warm, and fancy flows,
What will not argument sometimes suppose?)
An isle possessed by creatures of our kind,
Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
Let supposition lend her aid once more,
And land some grave optician on the shore;
He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
Close to the part where vision ought to be,
But finds that though his tubes assist the sight,
They cannot give it, or make darkness light.
He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
A sense they know not, to the wondering crowd;
He talks of light, and the prismatic hues,
As men of depth in erudition use;

But all he gains for his harangue is;—'Well!
What monstrous lies some travellers will tell.'
The soul, whose sight all-quickening grace renews,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
As diamonds, stripped of their opaque disguise,
Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
She speaks of Him, her author, guardian, friend,
Whose Love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm as all that love inspires,
And, in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.
She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys,
Though Wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long,
And, from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence;
Though Scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres;
The Truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream!
The danger they discern not, they deny,
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
But still a soul thus touched can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.
Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child,
She makes excuses where she might condemn,
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them;
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
The worst suggested, she believes the best;
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
And if perhaps made angry, soon appeased;
She rather waives than will dispute her right,

And injured, makes forgiveness her delight.
Such was the portrait an apostle drew,
The bright original was one he knew,
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.
When one that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropped her anchor, and her canvass furled,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.
Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,
To lull the painful malady with alms;
But Charity not feigned intends alone
Another's good;—theirs centres in their own;
And too short lived to reach the realms of peace,
Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
Is rather careless of her sister's fame:
Her superfluity the poor supplies,
But if she touch a character, it dies.
The seeming virtue weighed against the vice,
She deems all safe, for she has paid the price:
No Charity but alms aught values she,
Except in porcelain on her mantle-tree.
How many deeds with which the world has rung,
From pride in league with ignorance, have sprung!
But God o'errules all human follies still,
And bends the tough materials to his will.
A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
Has left some hundreds without home or food:
Extravagance and Avarice shall subscribe,
While Fame and Self-complacence are the bribe.

The brief proclaimed, it visits every pew,
But first the squire's, a compliment but due;
With slow deliberation he unties
His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes,
And while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm,
Till finding, what he might have found before,
A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
Pinched close between his finger and his thumb,
He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
Gold, to be sure!—Throughout the town 'tis told,
How the good squire gives never less than gold.
From motives such as his, though not the best,
Springs in due time supply for the distressed;
Not less effectual than what Love bestows,
Except that Office clips it as it goes.
But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
(Though Vice derided with a just design
Implies no trespass against Love Divine)
Once more I would adopt the graver style,
A teacher should be sparing of his smile.
Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame;
He hides behind a magisterial air
His own offences, and strips others bare;
Affects indeed a most humane concern,
That men, if gently tutored, will not learn,
That mulish folly, not to be reclaimed
By softer methods, must be made ashamed,
But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)
Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
Most satirists are indeed a public scourge;
Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge;
Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirred,
The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse,

The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
No skill in swordmanship, however just,
Can be secure against a madman's thrust,
And even Virtue, so unfairly matched,
Although immortal, may be pricked or scratched.
When Scandal has new minted an old lie,
Or taxed Invention for a fresh supply,
'Tis called a satire, and the World appears
Gathering around it, with erected ears:
A thousand names are tossed into the crowd,
Some whispered softly, and some twanged aloud,
Just as the sapience of an author's brain
Suggests it safe, or dangerous, to be plain.
Strange! how the frequent interjected dash
Quickens a market, and helps off the trash;
The important letters that include the rest,
Serve as a key to those that are suppressed:
Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
The world is charmed, and Scrib escapes the law.
So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
Worms may be caught by either head or tail,
Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
They meet with little pity, no redress;
Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,
Food for the famished rovers of the flood.
All zeal for a Reform that gives offence
To Peace and Charity, is mere pretence;—
A bold remark, but which, if well applied,
Would humble many a towering poet's pride.
Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,
And had no other play-place for his wit;
Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame,
He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame;
Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
The cause of Virtue could not be his view.
At every stroke Wit flashes in our eyes,
The turns are quick, the polished points surprise,

But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
That, while they please, possess us with alarms;
So have I seen (and hastened to the sight
On all the wings of holiday delight)
Where stands that monument of ancient power,
Named with emphatic dignity, 'The Tower,'
Guns, halberts, swords and pistols, great and small,
In starry forms disposed upon the wall:
We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
That brass and steel should make so fine a show;
But though we praise the exact designer's skill,
Account them implements of mischief still.
No works shall find acceptance, in that day
When all disguises shall be rent away,
That square not truly with the scripture plan,
Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.
As He ordains things sordid in their birth
To be resolved into their parent earth,
And though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs,
So Self starts nothing, but what tends apace
Home to the goal where it began the race.
Such as our motive is our aim must be,
If this be servile, that can ne'er be free:
If Self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
We glorify that Self, not him we ought;
Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The Judge of all men owes them no regard.
True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,
Fed by the Love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against Hope, and in the rudest scene,
Storms but enliven its unfading green;
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look at him who formed us and redeemed,
So glorious now, though once so disesteemed;
To see a God stretch forth his human hand,
To uphold the boundless scenes of his command;

To recollect that in a form like ours,
He bruised beneath his feet the infernal powers,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath He won so dearly in our name;
That throned above all height He condescends
To call the few that trust in him his friends;
That in the heaven of heavens, that space He deems
Too scanty for the exertion of his beams,
And shines as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below;
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like him, the soul, thus kindled from above,
Spreads wide her arms of universal love,
And still enlarged as she receives the grace,
Includes creation in her close embrace.
Behold a Christian!—and without the fires
The founder of that name alone inspires,
Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,
To make the shining prodigy complete,
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat!

Were Love, in these the world's last doting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,
The churches warmed, they would no longer hold
Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;
Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease,
And e'en the dipped and sprinkled live in peace:
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest.
The statesman, skilled in projects dark and deep,
Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep;
His Budget, often filled, yet always poor,
Might swing at ease behind his study door,
No longer prey upon our annual rents,
Or scare the nation with its big contents:
Disbanded legions freely might depart,
And slaying man would cease to be an art.
No learned disputants would take the field,

Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield;
Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,
Pelting each other for the public good.
Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love,
And I might spare myself the pains to show
What few can learn, and all suppose they know.
  Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,
In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
The attention Pleasure has so much engrossed.
But if, unhappily deceived, I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let Charity forgive me a mistake,
That Zeal, not Vanity, has chanced to make,
And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

CONVERSATION.

'Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quae
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.'

VIRG. Ecl. v. 81.

[ARGUMENT:—Conversation a gift dependent on culture, 1—Talking *v.* conversation, 8—Its results often worthless, 15—Impure language and oaths condemned, 31—Unprofitable debates, 81—The noisy dogmatist, 91—The cautious talker, 119—The positive talker, 145—The point of honour condemned, 163—Duelling, 171—Fists to be preferred, 195—Long tales, 203—Lying wonders, 217—Judicious story-telling, 235—Smoking, 245—The emphatic speaker, 269—The coxcomb, 283—State of health made a topic of conversation, 311—The fretful temper, 325—Bashfulness, 347—Arises from vanity, 363—The sportsman, 405—Conversation corrupted by fashion, 457—The disciples going to Emmaus, 505—Delights of religious conversation, 547—Age mellows the speech, 639—Fanaticism, 651—Communion with the good, 679—Conversation to be unconstrained, 703—Religion charged with hypocrisy, 719—Apology for digressing, 789—The poet's ignorance of the world may have misled him, 798—Religious conversation, 887.]

THOUGH Nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To every man his modicum of sense,
And Conversation, in its better part,
May be esteemed a gift, and not an art,
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
Words learned by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse;
Not more distinct from harmony divine
The constant creaking of a country sign.

As alphabets in ivory employ,
Hour after hour, the yet unlettered boy,
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
Those seeds of science called his A B C;
So language in the mouths of the adult,
Witness its insignificant result,
Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth,
And if it weigh the importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect, or use thee, as they ought!
But all shall give account of every wrong,
Who dare dishonour, or defile, the tongue;
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell their glory at a market price;
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.
There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb:
His wise forbearance has their end in view,
They fill their measure, and receive their due.
The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up every satyr in his den.
Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth!
Infectious as impure, your blighting power
Taints in its rudiments the promised flower;
Its odour perished, and its charming hue,
Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.
Not e'en the vigorous and headlong rage
Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
Affords a plea allowable, or just,
For making speech the pamperer of lust;

But when the breath of age commits the fault,
'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
So withered stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful, and no longer green;
The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.
Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
Some men have surely then a peaceful life!
Whatever subject occupy discourse,
The feats of Vestris, or the naval force,
Asseveration blustering in your face
Makes contradiction such a hopeless case;
In every tale they tell, or false or true,
Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
With oaths like rivets forced into the brain,
And e'en when sober truth prevails throughout,
They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
Who though devout, yet bigotry had none,
Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
With adjurations every word impress,
Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest;
Bowed at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begged an interest in his frequent prayers.
Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferred,
Henceforth associate in one common herd;
Religion, Virtue, Reason, Common Sense,
Pronounce your human form a false pretence,
A mere disguise, in which a devil lurks,
Who yet betrays his secret by his works.
Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate.
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,

Decide no question with their tedious length,
(For opposition gives opinion strength)
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably-disposed to death.
Oh! thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame;
No!—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground,
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated—No,
To brush the surface, and to make it flow;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake;
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapped again;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,
A noisy man is always in the right;
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscoat a distressful stare,
And when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly,—'To be sure—no doubt!'
DUBIUS is such a scrupulous good man—
Yes—you may catch him tripping, if you can.
He would not, with a peremptory tone,
Assert the nose upon his face his own;
With hesitation admirably slow
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.

His evidence, if he were called by law,
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving Truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense,
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not,
What he remembers seems to have forgot,
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centering at last in having none at all.
Yet, though he tease and baulk your listening ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool;
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach,
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.
Where men of judgment creep, and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay,
By sparks Absurdity strikes out of Pride;
Their want of light and intellect supplied
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear, and strong.
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course,
Flings at your head conviction in the lump
And gains remote conclusions at a jump;
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another they at once condemn,
And though self-idolized in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain, and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride;
Few competitions but engender spite,
And those the most, where neither has a right.

The Point of Honour has been deemed of use,
To teach good manners, and to curb abuse:
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polished manners are a mask we wear,
And at the bottom barbarous still and rude,
We are restrained indeed, but not subdued.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels, but their fatal end;
That now and then a hero must decease,
That the surviving world may live in peace.
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low;
That men engage in it impelled by force,
And fear, not courage, is its proper source;
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,
To rush into a fixed eternal state,
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shivering to the bar,
With all the guilt of such unnatural war,
Whatever Use may urge, or Honour plead,
On Reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude and surly? No—
A moral, sensible, and well bred man
Will not affront me, and no other can.
Were I empowered to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well loaded fists;
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let Dares beat Entellus black and blue,
Then each might show to his admiring friends,
In honourable bumps, his rich amends,

And carry, in contusions of his skull,
A satisfactory receipt in full.
A story in which native humour reigns,
Is often useful, always entertains;
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
May furnish illustration, well applied;
But sedentary weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations dull and dry,
Embellished with—'He said,' and, 'So said I.'
At every interview their route the same,
The repetition makes attention lame,
We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
And in the saddest part cry—'Droll indeed!'
The path of narrative with care pursue,
Still making probability your clue;
On all the vestiges of truth attend,
And let them guide you to a decent end.
Of all ambitions man may entertain,
The worst that can invade a sickly brain
Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
A great retailer of this curious ware,
Having unloaded and made many stare,
'Can this be true?'—an arch observer cries;
'Yes' (rather moved) 'I saw it with these eyes!'
'Sir! I believe it on that ground alone;
I could not, had I seen it with my own.'
A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct,
The language plain, and incidents well linked;
Tell not as new what every body knows,
And new or old, still hasten to a close,

There centering in a focus round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet:
What neither yields us profit nor delight,
Is like a nurse's lullaby at night;
Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.
The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
Then pause and puff—and speak, and pause again.
Such often, like the tube they so admire,
Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.
Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
The sex whose presence civilizes ours;
Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants,
To poison vermin that infest his plants,
But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
As to despise the glory of our kind,
And show the softest minds and fairest forms
As little mercy as the grubs and worms?
They dare not wait the riotous abuse
Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
When wine has given indecent language birth,
And forced the floodgates of licentious mirth;
For sea-born Venus her attachment shows
Still to that element from which she rose,
And with a quiet, which no fumes disturb,
Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.
The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose,
In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,
As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
Touched with the magnet, had attracted his.
His whispered theme, dilated and at large,
Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
An extract of his diary,—no more,
A tasteless journal of the day before.

He walked abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,
Called on a friend, drank tea, stepped home again,
Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
'Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now.'
I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume;
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show?
His odoriferous attempts to please
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees;
But we that make no honey, though we sting,
Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
'Tis wrong to bring into a mixed resort,
What makes some sick, and others *à-la-mort*,
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such a one should keep himself away.
A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
Quite as absurd, though not so light, as he;
A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
An oracle within an empty cask;
The solemn fop, significant and budge,
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge.
He says but little, and that little said
Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
His wit invites you by his looks to come,
But when you knock, it never is at home:
'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
Some handsome present, as your hopes presage,
'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
An absent friend's fidelity and love,
But when unpacked, your disappointment groans
To find it stuffed with brickbats, earth, and stones.
Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how oft they have been sick,
And give us, in recitals of disease,
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;

Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
How an emetic or cathartic sped;
Nothing is slightly touched, much less forgot,
Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.
Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas, for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp nightcap, and relapse;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad;
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.
Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
You always do too little or too much;
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,
Your elevated voice goes through the brain;
You fall at once into a lower key,
That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humblebee;
The southern sash admits too strong a light,
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night;
He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive;
Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish,
With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish,
He takes what he at first professed to loathe,
And in due time feeds heartily on both;
Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down;
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder if he can—
Alas! his efforts double his distress,
He likes yours little, and his own still less;
Thus always teasing others, always teased,
His only pleasure is to be displeased.
I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face,
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.
Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.

We sometimes think we could a speech produce
Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose,
But being tied, it dies upon the lip,
Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip:
Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.
Few Frenchmen of this evil have complained;
It seems as if we Britons were ordained,
By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
To fear each other, fearing none beside.
The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,
Self-searching with an introverted eye,
Concealed within an unsuspected part,
The vainest corner of our own vain heart;
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme;
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True Modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear;
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by Vanity produced and nursed.
The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial plate;
'Yes, ma'am,' and 'No, ma'am,' uttered softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go;
Each individual, suffering a constraint,
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint,
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry,
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection and well timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,

Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Filled up at last with interesting news;
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed;
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to naught,
Expression and the privilege of thought.
The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
I give him over as a desperate case.
Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure;
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
A mere fox-follower never is reclaimed.
Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
Whose only fit companion is his horse,
Or if, deserving of a better doom,
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.
Yet e'en the rogue that serves him, though he stand
To take his honour's orders, cap in hand,
Prefers his fellow grooms, with much good sense,
Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
If neither horse nor groom affect the squire,
Where can at last his jockeyship retire?
Oh! to the club, the scene of savage joys,
The school of coarse good fellowship and noise;
There, in the sweet society of those
Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
Let him improve his talent if he can,
Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.
Man's heart had been impenetrably sealed,
Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,

Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
Given him a soul, and bade him understand.
The reasoning power vouchsafed of course inferred
The power to clothe that reason with his word;
For all is perfect that God works on earth,
And He that gives conception adds the birth.
If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,
What uses of his boon the giver would.
The Mind despatched upon her busy toil,
Should range where Providence has blessed the soil;
Visiting every flower with labour meet,
And gathering all her treasures, sweet by sweet,
She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
That good diffused may more abundant grow,
And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
That fills the listening lover with delight,
Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,
To learn the twittering of a meaner bird?
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
That odious libel on a human voice?
No—Nature, unsophisticate by man,
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan;
The melody that was at first designed
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind
Is note for note delivered in our ears,
In the last scene of her six thousand years:
Yet Fashion, leader of a chattering train,
Whom man, for his own hurt, permits to reign,
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
And would degrade her votary to an ape,
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
Holds a usurped dominion o'er his tongue;
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And when accomplished in her wayward school,
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.

'Tis an unalterable fixed decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,
That Heaven and Hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,
God and his attributes (a field of day
Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray),
Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,
Be never named in ears esteemed polite.
That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
Shall stand proscribed, a madman or a knave,
A close designer not to be believed,
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.
O folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
Is it incredible, or can it seem
A dream to any except those that dream,
That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire,
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire?
Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies,
That air of insolence affronts your God,
You need his pardon, and provoke his rod:
Now, in a posture that becomes you more
Than that heroic strut assumed before,
Know, your arrears with every hour accrue
For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
Acquainted with the woes that fear or shame,
By Fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
And having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
Have proved them truths too big to be expressed.
Go seek on Revelation's hallowed ground,
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found;
Touched by that power that you have dared to mock,
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,
Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.

It happened on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enriched them still the more;
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than He appeared to have done;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wondered He should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
And asked them, with a kind, engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begged a share.
Informed, He gathered up the broken thread,
And, Truth and Wisdom gracing all He said,
Explained, illustrated, and searched so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That reaching home, 'The night,' they said, 'is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here.'
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, ''Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all He deigned to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?'

Now theirs was converse such as it behoves
Man to maintain, and such as God approves:
Their views, indeed, were indistinct and dim,
But yet successful, being aimed at him.
Christ and his character their only scope,
Their object, and their subject, and their hope,

They felt what it became them much to feel,
And wanting him to loose the sacred seal,
Found him as prompt, as their desire was true,
To spread the newborn glories in their view.
Well—what are ages, and the lapse of time,
Matched against truths as lasting as sublime?
Can length of years on God himself exact,
Or make that fiction which was once a fact?
No; marble and recording brass decay,
And, like the graver's memory, pass away;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to dust;
But Truth divine for ever stands secure,
Its head as guarded as its base is sure;
Fixed in the rolling flood of endless years
The pillar of the eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that architect who built the skies.
Hearts may be found that harbour at this hour
That love of Christ in all its quickening power,
And lips unstained by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
O days of heaven, and nights of equal praise!
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest.
'What, always dreaming over heavenly things,
Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon wings?
Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,
Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,

Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the splenetic dull hours away.
Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine,
Leaves saints to enjoy those altitudes they teach,
And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.'
Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right,
The fixed fee-simple of the vain and light?
Can hopes of Heaven, bright prospects of an hour
That come to waft us out of sorrow's power,
Obscure or quench a faculty that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?
Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,
But gives it usefulness unknown before,
And purifying, makes it shine the more.
A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,
A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight,
Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,
'Tis always active on the side of Truth;
Temperance and Peace insure its healthful state,
And make it brightest at its latest date.
Oh! I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
A veteran warrior in the christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield;
Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
Exact yet not precise, though meek keen-eyed;
A man that would have foiled at their own play
A dozen would-bes of the modern day;
Who when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce,
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlightened page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear:

Yet above all, his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the gospel theme;
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seemed there at home,
Ambitious, not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he loved so well.
It moves me more perhaps than Folly ought,
When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
Suppose themselves monopolists of sense,
And wiser men's ability, pretence.
Though Time will wear us, and we must grow old,
Such men are not forgot as soon as cold,
Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,
Embalmed for ever in its own perfume.
And to say truth, though in its early prime,
And when unstained with any grosser crime,
Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
That in the valley of decline are lost,
And Virtue with peculiar charms appears,
Crowned with the garland of life's blooming years;
Yet Age, by long experience well informed,
Well read, well tempered, with religion warmed,
That fire abated which impels rash youth,
Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
As Time improves the grape's authentic juice,
Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
And claims a reverence in its shortening day,
That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound,
Than those a brighter season pours around,
And like the stores autumnal suns mature,
Through wintry rigours unimpaired endure.
What is fanatic frenzy, scorned so much,
And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,
That fire is catching if you draw too near;
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.

To tremble (as the creature of an hour
Ought at the view of an Almighty power)
Before his presence, at whose awful throne
All tremble in all worlds, except our own;
To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise;
Though common sense, allowed a casting voice,
And free from bias, must approve the choice,
Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,
And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
But that disease, when soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
It views the truth with a distorted eye,
And either warps or lays it useless by;
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause,
And while at heart sin unrelinquished lies,
Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies,
'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,
Shines in the dark, but ushered into day,
The stench remains, the lustre dies away.
True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
Of hearts in union mutually disclosed!
And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
Those hearts should be reclaimed, renewed, upright.
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallowed name,
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
A dark confederacy against the laws
Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause:
They build each other up with dreadful skill,
As bastions set point blank against God's will,
Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out;
Call legions up from Hell to back the deed,
And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.
But souls that carry on a blest exchange
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,

And, with a fearless confidence, make known
The sorrows Sympathy esteems its own,
Daily derive increasing light and force.
From such communion in their pleasant course,
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And one in heart, in interest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.
But Conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when Religion leads the way,
Should flow like waters after summer showers,
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.
The Christian, in whose soul, though now distressed,
Lives the dear thought of joys he once possessed,
When all his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,
Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,
Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.
The song of Sion is a tasteless thing,
Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,
The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
And give the strain the compass it demands.
Strange tidings these to tell a world who treat
All but their own experience as deceit!
Will they believe, though credulous enough
To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
That there are blest inhabitants of earth,
Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
From things terrestrial, and divinely changed;
Their very language of a kind that speaks
The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks;
Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,
As Tully with philosophy once dealt,
And in the silent watches of the night,
And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,

The social walk, or solitary ride,
Keep still the dear companion at their side?
No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
With such a jest as filled with hellish glee
Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;
But veneration or respect finds none,
Save from the subjects of that work alone.
The World grown old her deep discernment shows,
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace;
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
And finds Hypocrisy close lurking there;
And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
Concludes his unfeigned love of him, a feint.
And yet, God knows, look human nature through,
(And in due time the world shall know it too)
That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,
That after man's defection laid all waste,
Sincerity towards the heart-searching God
Has made the new-born creature her abode,
Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls,
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
Sincerity! why 'tis his only pride,
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
He knows that God demands his heart entire,
And gives him all his just demands require.
Without it, his pretensions were as vain,
As, having it, he deems the world's disdain;
That great defect would cost him, not alone
Man's favourable judgment, but his own;
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear,
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
Retort the charge, and let the World be told
She boasts a confidence she does not hold;
That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
A cold misgiving, and a killing dread:

That, while in health, the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short;
That sick, she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie;
That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,
She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,
Her utmost reach, historical assent,
The doctrines warped to what they never meant;
That truth itself is in her head as dull
And useless as a candle in a skull,
And all her love of God a groundless claim,
A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
And all her censures of the work of grace,
Are insincere, meant only to conceal
A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel;
That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.
A poet does not work by square or line,
As smiths and joiners perfect a design;
At least we moderns, our attention less,
Beyond the example of our sires digress,
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
The world and I fortuitously met,
I owed a trifle, and have paid the debt;
She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,
And having struck the balance, now proceed.
Perhaps, however, as some years have passed
Since she and I conversed together last,
And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
Great changes and new manners have occurred,
And blest reforms that I have never heard,
And she may now be as discreet and wise,
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
Sobriety perhaps may now be found
Where once intoxication pressed the ground;

The subtle and injurious may be just,
And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust;
Arts once esteemed may be with shame dismissed,
Charity may relax the miser's fist,
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)
That fables old, that seemed for ever mute
Revived, are hastening into fresh repute,
And gods and goddesses discarded long,
Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song,
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again;
That certain feasts are instituted now,
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow;
That all Olympus through the country roves,
To consecrate our few remaining groves,
And Echo learns politely to repeat
The praise of names for ages obsolete;
That having proved the weakness, it should seem,
Of Revelation's ineffectual beam,
To bring the passions under sober sway,
And give the moral springs their proper play,
They mean to try what may at last be done,
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
And whether Roman rites may not produce
The virtues of old Rome for English use.
May such success attend the pious plan,
May Mercury once more embellish man,
Grace him again with long forgotten arts,
Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts,
Make him athletic as in days of old,
Learned at the bar, in the *palæstra* bold,
Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
And teach the softer not to copy theirs.
The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught
Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.

'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,
For us plain folks, and all who side with us,
To build our altar, confident and bold,
And say as stern Elijah said of old,
'The strife now stands upon a fair award,
If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord;
If he be silent, faith is all a whim,
Then Baal is the God, and worship him.'
Digression is so much in modern use,
Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
Some never seem so wide of their intent,
As when returning to the theme they meant;
As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
Make every parish but their own their home.
Though such continual zigzags in a book,
Such drunken reelings, have an awkward look,
And I had rather creep to what is true,
Than rove and stagger with no mark in view;
Yet to consult a little seemed no crime,
The freakish humour of the present time:
But now, to gather up what seems dispersed,
And touch the subject I designed at first,
May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
Best for the public, and my wisest part.
And first, let no man charge me, that I mean
To close in sable every social scene,
And give good company a face severe,
As if they met around a father's bier;
For tell some men that pleasure, all their bent,
And laughter, all their work, is life misspent,
Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.
To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scattered rocks and opening shades,

And while it shows the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks inspires.
Thus touched, the tongue receives a sacred cure
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure;
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
Pursues the course that truth and nature teach;
No longer labours merely to produce
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use;
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,
While all the happy man possessed before,
The gift of nature, or the classic store,
Is made subservient to the grand design
For which heaven formed the faculty divine.
So should an idiot, while at large he strays,
Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays,
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes;
But let the wise and well instructed hand
Once take the shell beneath his just command,
In gentle sounds it seems as it complained
Of the rude injuries it late sustained,
Till tuned at length to some immortal song,
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise along.

RETIREMENT.

. . . studiis florens ignobilis oti.'
VIRG. Geor. Lib. iv. 564.

[ARGUMENT :—Retirement from busy life desired, 1—Rarely improved, 40—Happy if spent in meditation on God's works, 45—Favourable to spiritual improvement, 117—Panorama of human life, 147—Various motives for seeking retirement, 169—The poet's motive, 187—The lover's, 219—The hypochondriac, 279—Receives little sympathy, 301—The statesman's retirement, 365—His anticipations of enjoyment, 381—Soon returns to society, 479—Suburban villas, 481—Life at a watering-place, 515—The ocean, 525—The spendthrift's enforced retirement, 559—The sportsman turned ostler, 575—Leisure difficult of management, 611—Its responsibilities, 649—Good books needed in retirement, 683—Friends, 719—Divine communion, 743—Religion not adverse to innocent pleasures, 783—The Poet's own employment of retirement, 801.]

HACKNEYED in business, wearied at that oar
Which thousands once fast chained to quit no more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego;
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
Where all his long anxieties forgot,
Amid the charms of a sequestered spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er
And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of Ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
And having lived a trifler, die a man.

Thus Conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
Though long rebelled against, not yet suppressed,
And calls a creature formed for God alone,
For Heaven's high purposes, and not his own,
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
From what debilitates and what inflames,
From cities humming with a restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
Where works of man are clustered close around,
And works of God are hardly to be found,
To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,
Traces of Eden are still seen below,
Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,
Remind him of his Maker's power and love.
'Tis well if, looked for at so late a day,
In the last scene of such a senseless play,
True Wisdom will attend his feeble call,
And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
Souls that have long despised their heavenly birth,
Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
For threescore years employed with ceaseless care
In catching smoke and feeding upon air,
Conversant only with the ways of men,
Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart,
Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,
And draining its nutritious powers to feed
Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.
  Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from Custom's idiot sway,
To serve the Sovereign we were born to obey.
Then sweet to muse upon his skill displayed
(Infinite skill) in all that He has made!

To trace in Nature's most minute design
The signature and stamp of power divine,
Contrivance intricate expressed with ease,
Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
Within the small dimensions of a point,
Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
His mighty work, who speaks and it is done,
The Invisible in things scarce seen revealed,
To whom an atom is an ample field.
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
These hatched, and those resuscitated worms,
New life ordained and brighter scenes to share,
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,
More hideous foes than fancy can devise;
With helmet heads, and dragon-scales adorned,
The mighty myriads, now securely scorned,
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth:
Then with a glance of Fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers poured at his command,
From urns that never fail, through every land;
These like a deluge with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course;
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales;
Seas on which every nation spreads her sails;
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,
The crescent moon, the diadem of night,
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchored in the deep abyss of space—
At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
'These are thy glorious works, thou Source of good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood!
Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair;

Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought.
Absorbed in that immensity I see,
I shrink abased, and yet aspire to Thee;
Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day,
Thy words, more clearly than thy works, display,
That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
I may resemble Thee, and call Thee mine.'
O blessed proficiency! surpassing all
That men erroneously their glory call,
The recompense that arts or arms can yield,
The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
Compared with this sublimest life below,
Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show?
Thus studied, used and consecrated thus,
Whatever is, seems formed indeed for us;
Not as the plaything of a froward child,
Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
Of pride, ambition, or impure desires,
But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
From mighty means to more important ends,
Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for him.
Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,
A superstitious and monastic course:
Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be feared amid the busiest scenes,
Or scorned where business never intervenes.
But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,
And in a world where, other ills apart,
The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
To limit thought, by Nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish Fancy points the way;

To bid the pleadings of Self-love be still,
Resign our own and seek our Maker's will;
To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there;
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion, and no favourite sin,
And search the themes, important above all,
Ourselves and our recovery from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind released
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,
How to secure, in some propitious hour,
The point of interest or the post of power,
A soul serene, and equally retired
From objects too much dreaded or desired,
Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.
  Opening the map of God's extensive plan,
We find a little isle, this life of man,
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years.
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
With care collect what in their eyes excels,
Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells;
Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And every hour sweeps multitudes away;
They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
A few forsake the throng; with lifted eyes
Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Sealed with his signet whom they serve and love,
Scorned by the rest with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,

And unregretted are soon snatched away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.
Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use;
The love of change that lives in every breast,
Genius, and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its votary to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize
That courts display before ambitious eyes,
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,
Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.
With eager step, and carelessly arrayed,
For such a cause the Poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight;
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,
All, all alike, transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
O Nature! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections at whose word they rose,
Next to that power who formed thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,

That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light though I should miss renown,
And poring on thy page, whose every line
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enriched by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use,
Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies Nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by;
His hours of leisure and recess employs
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.
The Lover too shuns business and alarms,
Tender idolater of absent charms.
Saints offer nothing, in their warmest prayers,
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs;
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
And every thought that wanders is a crime.
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
And weeps a sad libation in despair;
Adores a creature, and devout in vain,
Wins in return an answer of disdain.
As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grained ash, or glossy beech,
In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace,
So Love, that clings around the noblest minds,
Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds;
The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
Refines his speech, and fashions his address;
But farewell promises of happier fruits,
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits;

Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake;
Who will may pant for glory and excel,
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell!
Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
May least offend against so pure a flame,
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
Can least brook management, however mild,
Yet let a poet (Poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms)
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
Pastoral images and still retreats,
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams,
Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
Conspire against thy peace with one design,
Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.
Up!—God has formed thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue,
Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow
When he designed a Paradise below,
The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
Collect the scattered truths that Study gleans,
Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
No longer give an image all thine heart;
Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.
Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN, whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,

Gives Melancholy up to Nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes; in this embowered alcove
Stand close concealed, and see a statue move:
Lips busy, and eyes fixed, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest, or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure, or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer brook are past away.
This is a sight for Pity to peruse
Till she resemble faintly what she views,
Till Sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least:
Job felt it, when he groaned beneath the rod
And the barbed arrows of a frowning God,
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
Blessed, rather cursed, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of close-hammered steel,
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds that deem derided pain a treat,
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit that puppet prompters might inspire,
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke,
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing:
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise;

He that has not usurped the name of man
Does all, and deems too little, all he can,
To assuage the throbbings of the festered part,
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes;
Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright,
The screws reversed (a task which if He please
God in a moment executes with ease)
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till He tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
Nor gales that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God who makes them heals.
And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss His chastening hand.
To thee the dayspring, and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine;
Yet seek Him, in his favour life is found,
All bliss beside a shadow or a sound;
Then Heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth;

Nature assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlooked no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.
'Ye groves,' (the statesman at his desk exclaims,
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims)
'My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
Beneath your shades your grey possessor hide,
Receive me, languishing for that repose
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,
When boyish innocence was all my praise!)
Hour after hour delightfully allot
To studies then familiar, since forgot,
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardour as I mused along;
Nor seldom, as propitious Heaven might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I pressed
His undissembling virtue to my breast;
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts that while they seem to stay
A falling empire, hasten its decay.
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come;
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends my choice;
We meet at last in one sincere desire,
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.'
'Tis done;—he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumbered Atlas of the state.

Ask not the boy, who when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is Freedom?—he was always free:
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill fashioned hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize:
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile expressed,
In Freedom lost so long, now repossessed;
The tongue whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that, whether dressed or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature in every form inspires delight,
But never marked her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrowed lands, the stream that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs that almost escape the inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he passed,
Seem all created since he travelled last.
Master of all the enjoyments he designed,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,

Begins a long look out for distant land,
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home;
Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near;
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend;
A man whom marks of condescending grace
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place;
Who comes when called, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause;
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence;
On whom he rests well pleased his weary powers,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force,
But nowhere with a current so serene,
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss!
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here;
Nor happiness is felt, except the true,
That does not charm the more for being new.
This observation, as it chanced, not made,
Or if the thought occurred, not duly weighed,
He sighs,—for after all, by slow degrees,
The spot he loved has lost the power to please;
To cross his ambling pony day by day,
Seems at the best but dreaming life away;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there;

With aching heart, and discontented looks,
Returns at noon to billiards, or to books,
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys
A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
He chides the tardiness of every post,
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.
Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,
Tight boxes neatly sashed, and in a blaze
With all a July sun's collected rays,
Delight the citizen, who gasping there,
Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
O sweet retirement! who would balk the thought,
That could afford retirement, or could not?
'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
The second milestone fronts the garden gate;
A step if fair, and if a shower approach,
You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
There prisoned in a parlour snug and small,
Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
The man of business and his friends compressed
Forget their labours, and yet find no rest;
But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
From every window, and the fields are green;
Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
And what could a remoter scene show more?
A sense of elegance we rarely find
The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
And ignorance of better things makes man,
Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can;
And he that deems his leisure well bestowed
In contemplation of a turnpike-road,
Is occupied as well, employs his hours
As wisely, and as much improves his powers,

As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
With all the charms of an accomplished taste.
Yet hence, alas! insolvencies, and hence
The unpitied victim of ill judged expense,
From all his wearisome engagements freed,
Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.
  Your prudent grandmammas, ye modern belles,
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,
When health required it, would consent to roam,
Else more attached to pleasures found at home.
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
And all, impatient of dry land, agree,
With one consent to rush into the sea.
  Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
Much of the power and majesty of God;
He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep;
Vast as it is, it answers as it flows,
The breathings of the lightest air that blows;
Curling and whitening over all the waste,
The rising waves obey the increasing blast,
Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,
Till He that rides the whirlwind, checks the rein,
Then all the world of waters sleeps again.
Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
Now in the floods, now panting in the meads.
Votaries of Pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
Oh! grant a poet leave to recommend
(A poet fond of Nature and your friend)
Her slighted works to your admiring view;
Her works must needs excel who fashioned you.
Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,

Condemn the prattler, for his idle pains,
To waste unheard the music of his strains,
And deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,
That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,
Mark well the finished plan without a fault,
The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,
Earth's millions daily fed, a world employed
In gathering plenty yet to be enjoyed,
Till Gratitude grew vocal in the praise
Of God, beneficent in all His ways;
Graced with such wisdom, how would beauty shine!
Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.
  Anticipated rents, and bills unpaid,
Force many a shining youth into the shade,
Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.
There hid in loathed obscurity, removed
From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
He just endures, and, with a sickly spleen,
Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme,
Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime,
The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
Are musical enough in Thomson's song;
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets;
He likes the country, but in truth must own,
Most likes it, when he studies it in town.
  Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame,
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,
Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
And always, ere he mounted, kissed his horse.
The estate his sires had owned in ancient years,
Was quickly distanced, matched against a peer's.
Jack vanished, was regretted and forgot,
'Tis wild good nature's never failing lot.
At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,

My Lord, alighting at his usual place,
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise
He might escape the most observing eyes,
And whistling as if unconcerned and gay,
Curried his nag, and looked another way.
Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
O'erwhelmed at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
He pressed him much to quit his base employ;
His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
Influence, and power, were all at his command:
Peers are not always generous as well bred,
But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
Jack bowed, and was obliged;—confessed 'twas strange,
That so retired he should not wish a change,
But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
And his old stint—three thousand pounds a year.
  Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe,
Some seeking happiness not found below,
Some to comply with humour, and a mind
To social scenes by nature disinclined,
Some swayed by fashion, some by deep disgust,
Some self-impoverished, and because they must,
But few that court Retirement are aware
Of half the toils they must encounter there.
  Lucrative offices are seldom lost
For want of powers proportioned to the post:
Give e'en a dunce the employment he desires,
And he soon finds the talents it requires;
A business with an income at its heels
Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
But in his arduous enterprise to close
His active years with indolent repose,
He finds the labours of that state exceed
His utmost faculties, severe indeed.
'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
But not to manage leisure with a grace;

Absence of occupation is not rest,
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.
The veteran steed excused his task at length,
In kind compassion of his failing strength,
And turned into the park or mead to graze,
Exempt from future service all his days,
There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind:
But when his lord would quit the busy road,
To taste a joy like that he has bestowed,
He proves, less happy than his favoured brute,
A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
As natural as when asleep to dream;
But reveries (for human minds will act)
Specious in show, impossible in fact,
Those flimsy webs that break as soon as wrought,
Attain not to the dignity of thought;
Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain,
Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign;
Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
Whence, and what are we? to what end ordained?
What means the drama by the world sustained?
Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
Is duty a mere sport, or an employ?
Like an intrusted talent, or a toy?
Is there, as Reason, Conscience, Scripture say,
Cause to provide for a great future day,
When, earth's assigned duration at an end,
Man shall be summoned and the dead attend?
The trumpet—will it sound? the curtain rise?
And show the august tribunal of the skies,
Where no prevarication shall avail,
Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
And Conscience and our Conduct judge us all?

Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
To learned cares or philosophic toil,
Though I revere your honourable names,
Your useful labours, and important aims,
And hold the world indebted to your aid,
Enriched with the discoveries ye have made,
Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem
A mind employed on so sublime a theme,
Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
And outline of the present transient state,
And after poising her adventurous wings,
Settling at last upon eternal things,
Far more intelligent, and better taught
The strenuous use of profitable thought,
Than ye, when happiest, and enlightened most,
And highest in renown, can justly boast.
A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as when it stands.
Books, therefore, not the scandal of the shelves
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves;
Nor those in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show;
Nor his who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church and laughed his word to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab Religion with a sly side-thrust;
Nor those of learned philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark;
But such as Learning without false pretence,
The friend of Truth, the associate of sound Sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong Judgment labouring in the scripture mine,

All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use:
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And while she polishes, perverts the taste;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one general cry,
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars Invention, and makes Fancy lame,
Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune;
And novels (witness every month's Review)
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
Give Truth a lustre, and make Wisdom smile.
Friends (for I cannot stint as some have done,
Too rigid, in my view, that name to one,
Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast
Will stand advanced a step above the rest;
Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,
But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
Well born, well disciplined, who, placed apart
From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
And, though the world may think the ingredients odd,
The love of virtue, and the fear of God!
Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,
A temper rustic as the life we lead,
And keep the polish of the manners clean,
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scène;
For solitude, however some may rave,
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,

A sepulchre in which the living lie,
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
I praise the Frenchman, his remark was shrewd,
'How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude!
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper—solitude is sweet.'
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
Can save us always from a tedious day,
Or shine the dullness of still life away;
Divine Communion, carefully enjoyed,
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
O sacred art! to which alone life owes
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close.
Scorned in a world, indebted to that scorn
For evils daily felt and hardly borne,
Not knowing thee, we reap, with bleeding hands,
Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,
And while Experience cautions us in vain,
Grasp seeming Happiness, and find it Pain.
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
Lost by abandoning her own relief,
Murmuring and ungrateful Discontent,
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant,
Those humours, tart as wines upon the fret,
Which Idleness and Weariness beget,
These and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast,
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
Divine Communion chases, as the day
Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.
See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,
Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,
To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
Hear him, o'erwhelmed with sorrow, yet rejoice;
No womanish or wailing grief has part,
No, not a moment, in his royal heart;

'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake;
His soul exults, Hope animates his lays,
The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
And wilds familiar with a lion's roar,
Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before;
'Tis Love like his that can alone defeat
The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.
  Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumbered pleasures harmlessly pursued;
To study culture, and with artful toil
To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil;
To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands;
To cherish Virtue in an humble state,
And share the joys your Bounty may create;
To mark the matchless workings of the Power
That shuts within its seed the future flower,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In colour these, and those delight the smell,
Sends Nature forth, the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes;
To teach the canvass innocent deceit,
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—
These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
That leave no stain upon the wing of Time.
  Me poetry (or rather notes that aim,
Feebly and vainly, at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse;
Content if thus sequestered I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's, praise,
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

FRIENDSHIP.

WHAT Virtue, or what mental grace,
But men unqualified and base
  Will boast it their possession?
Profusion apes the noble part
Of Liberality of heart,
  And Dullness of Discretion.

If every polished gem we find
Illuminating heart or mind,
  Provoke to imitation;
No wonder Friendship does the same,
That jewel of the purest flame,
  Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend
The requisites that form a friend,
  A real and a sound one;—
Nor any fool he would deceive,
But prove as ready to believe,
  And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust,—
  An error soon corrected;
For who but learns in riper years
That man, when smoothest he appears,
  Is most to be suspected?

But here again a danger lies,
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,
  And taken trash for treasure,
We should unwarily conclude
Friendship a false ideal good,
  A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair,
  Nor is it wise complaining,
If either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
  We sought without attaining.

No Friendship will abide the test
That stands on sordid interest,
  Or mean self-love erected;
Nor such as may awhile subsist
Between the sot and sensualist,
  For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend should come disposed
To exhibit, in full bloom disclosed,
  The graces and the beauties
That form the character he seeks,
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
  Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,
And equal truth on either side,
  And constantly supported;
'Tis senseless arrogance to accuse
Another of sinister views,
  Our own as much distorted.

But will Sincerity suffice?
It is indeed above all price,
  And must be made the basis;

But every virtue of the soul
Must constitute the charming whole,
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied
By ceaseless sharp corrosion:
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
In hopes of permanent delight
The secret just committed,
Forgetting its important weight,
They drop through mere desire to prate,
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
If Envy chance to creep in;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

As Envy pines at good possessed,
So Jealousy looks forth distressed
On good that seems approaching;
And if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
Unless belied by common fame,
Are sadly prone to quarrel,
To deem the wit a friend displays
A tax upon their own just praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renowned for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
  With Friendship's finest feeling,
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And say he wounded you in jest,
  By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear
For tattlers, will be sure to hear
  The trumpet of contention;
Aspersion is the babbler's trade,
To listen is to lend him aid,
  And rush into dissension.

A Friendship that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
  The sparks of disputation,
Like Hand-in-Hand insurance plates,
Most unavoidably creates
  The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as a needle to the pole,
  Their humour yet so various—
They manifest their whole life through
The needle's deviations too,
  Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete;
  Plebeians must surrender,
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
  Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene
(As Irish bogs are always green)
  They sleep secure from waking;

And are indeed a bog, that bears
Your unparticipated cares,
  Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and Patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics
  Without an effervescence,
Like that of salts with lemon juice,
Which does not yet like that produce
  A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life;
  But friends that chance to differ
On points which God has left at large,
How freely will they meet and charge!
  No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent
Needs no expense of argument,
  No cutting and contriving—
Seeking a real friend, we seem
To adopt the chymists' golden dream,
  With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,
Some blemish in due time made known
  By trespass or omission;
Sometimes occasion brings to light
Our friend's defect long hid from sight,
  And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
  And having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
  Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
  That constancy befits them,
Are observations on the case
That savour much of commonplace,
  And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone
  To finish a fine building—
The palace were but half complete,
If he could possibly forget
  The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumps upon your back
  How he esteems your merit,
Is such a friend that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
  To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
  First fixes our attention;
So manners decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
  Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,
'Say little, and hear all you can;'
  Safe policy, but hateful:
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,—
  Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,
Shall find me as reserved as he,
  No subterfuge, or pleading,

Shall win my confidence again;
I will by no means entertain
A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
Of evils yet unmentioned—
May prove the task, a task indeed,
In which 'tis much, if we succeed,
However well intentioned.

Pursue the search, and you will find
Good sense and knowledge of mankind
To be at least expedient;
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
A principal ingredient.

The noblest Friendship ever shown
The Saviour's history makes known,
Though some have turned and turned it;
And whether being crazed or blind,
Or seeking with a biassed mind,
Have not, it seems, discerned it.

O Friendship! if my soul forego
Thy dear delights while here below,
To mortify and grieve me,
May I myself at last appear
Unworthy, base, and insincere,
Or may my friend deceive me!

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK, DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE IN THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ.

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of Humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,—
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, Friendship, and Love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh! had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth;
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford,

But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

Ye Winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore,
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
Oh! tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the Mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-wingèd arrows of Light;
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! Recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair,—
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There is Mercy in every place,
And Mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even Affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

THE nymph must lose her female friend,
If more admired than she—
But where will fierce contention end,
If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
  Appeared two lovely foes,
Aspiring to the rank of Queen,
  The Lily and the Rose.

'The Rose soon reddened into rage,
  And swelling with disdain,
Appealed to many a poet's page
  To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
  A fair imperial flower;
She seemed designed for Flora's hand,
  The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
  The Goddess chanced to hear,
And flew to save, ere yet too late,
  The pride of the parterre;

'Yours is,' she said, 'the nobler hue,
  And yours the statelier mien;
And till a third surpasses you,
  Let each be deemed a Queen.'

Thus soothed and reconciled, each seeks
  The fairest British fair;
The seat of empire is her cheeks,
  They reign united there.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE.

THE lady thus addressed her spouse—
'What a mere dungeon is this house!
By no means large enough; and was it,
Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
Those hangings with their worn-out graces,
Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,

Are such an antiquated scene,
They overwhelm me with the spleen.'
Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark:
'No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door
Precisely when the clock strikes four.'
'You are so deaf,' the lady cried,
(And raised her voice and frowned beside)
'You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear?'
'Dismiss poor Harry!' he replies;
'Some people are more nice than wise;
For one slight trespass all this stir?
What if he did ride whip and spur,
'Twas but a mile; your favourite horse
Will never look one hair the worse.'
'Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing!'
'Child! I am rather hard of hearing.'
'Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl:
I tell you, you can't hear at all!'
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
'No matter if you hear or no.'
Alas! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be feared,
As to be wantonly incurred,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On every trivial provocation?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear,
And something every day they live
To pity, and perhaps forgive.
But if infirmities that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish, or a sense impaired,
Are crimes so little to be spared,

Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
And tumult, and intestine war.
The Love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention;
But lives, when that exterior grace
Which first inspired the flame, decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will, with sympathy, endure
Those evils it would gladly cure;
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
Shows Love to be a mere profession;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is.

BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods.

Sage beneath the spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke,
Full of rage and full of grief.

'Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

'Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorred,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

'Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

'Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

'Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

'Regions Cæsar never knew,
Thy posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew;—
None invincible as they.'

Such the Bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow:
Rushed to battle, fought, and died;
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

'Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!'

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

AN oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard,—though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded:—
'Ah, hapless wretch! condemned to dwell
For ever in my native shell,
Ordained to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease,
But tossed and buffeted about,
Now in the water and now out.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine!
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast rooted against every rub.'
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough:
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied:—
'When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants called sensitive grow there?'
No matter when—a poet's Muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.
'You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you:
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unlettered spark,

With curious touch examines me,
If I' can feel as well as he;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says—"Well, 'tis more than one would think!"
Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't!)
In being touched, and crying—Don't!'
A Poet, in his evening walk,
O'erheard and checked this idle talk.
'And your fine sense,' he said, 'and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,
Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.
Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong;
Your feelings in their full amount
Are all upon your own account.
'You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
Complain of being thus exposed;
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat
(Save when the knife is at your throat)
Wherever driven by wind or tide,
Exempt from every ill beside.
'And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon every touch a blemish,
If all the plants that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all—not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love:
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine.'
His censure reached them as he dealt it,
And each by shrinking showed he felt it.

THE COLUBRIAD.

CLOSE by the threshold of a door nailed fast
Three kittens sat; each kitten looked aghast.
I, passing swift and inattentive by,
At the three kittens cast a careless eye;
Not much concerned to know what they did there,
Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.
But presently a loud and furious hiss
Caused me to stop, and to exclaim, 'What's this?'
When lo! upon the threshold met my view,
With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,
A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.
Forth from his head his forked tongue he throws,
Darting it full against a kitten's nose;
Who having never seen, in field or house,
The like, sat still and silent as a mouse;
Only projecting, with attention due,
Her whiskered face, she asked him, 'Who are you?'
On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,
But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe;
With which well armed I hastened to the spot,
To find the viper, but I found him not.
And turning up the leaves and shrubs around,
Found only that he was not to be found.
But still the kittens, sitting as before,
Sat watching close the bottom of the door.
'I hope,' said I, 'the villain I would kill
Has slipped between the door and the door sill;
And if I make dispatch, and follow hard,
No doubt but I shall find him in the yard:'
For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,
'Twas in the garden that I found him first.
Even there I found him, there the full grown cat
His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat:
As curious as the kittens erst had been
To learn what this phenomenon might mean.

Filled with heroic ardour at the sight,
And fearing every moment he would bite,
And rob our household of our only cat
That was of age to combat with a rat;
With outstretched hoe I slew him at the door,
And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED,
BY DESIRE OF LADY AUSTEN, WHO WANTED WORDS
TO THE MARCH IN SCIPIO.

TOLL for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete!

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in the sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes
And mingle with our cup
The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again,
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And He and His Eight Hundred
Must plough the wave no more.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN.

SHEWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
'Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we.'

He soon replied,—'I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go.'

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin,—'That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.'

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddletree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,—
'The wine is left behind!'

'Good lack!' quoth he, 'yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise.'

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, 'Fair and softly,' John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, 'Well done!'
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around;
'He carries weight!' 'He rides a race!'
'Tis for a thousand pound!'

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about,
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton, his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

'Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!'
They all at once did cry;
'The dinner waits, and we are tired:'—
Said Gilpin—'So am I!'

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till, at his friend the calender's,
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

'What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?'

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender,
In merry guise, he spoke:

'I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,—
They are upon the road.'

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn,
Thus showed his ready wit;—
'My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

'But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.'

Said John,—'It is my wedding day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.'

So turning to his horse, he said,
'I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.'

Ah! luckless speech, and bootless boast,
For which he paid full dear;
For while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
  Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first,
  For why?—they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
  She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
  That drove them to the Bell,
'This shall be yours, when you bring back
  My husband safe and well.'

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
  By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
  They raised the hue and cry:—

'Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!'
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike-gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the King,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiny, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now, beneath this walnut shade,
He finds his long, last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,
From which no care can save,
And partner once of Tiny's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

THE ROSE.

THE rose had been washed (just washed in a shower)
  Which Mary to Anna conveyed,
The plentiful moisture encumbered the flower,
  And weighed down its beautiful head.

The cup was all filled, and the leaves were all wet,
  And it seemed to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret,
  On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
  For a nosegay, so dripping and drowned,
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
  I snapped it, it fell to the ground.

'And such,' I exclaimed, 'is the pitiless part
  Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
  Already to sorrow resigned.

'This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
  Might have bloomed with its owner a while;
And the tear that is wiped with a little address
  May be followed perhaps by a smile.'

NOTES.

NOTES.

LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED.

Written in February or March 1779. Published by Cowper in *Poems*, 1782, p. 320, with this note:—'It may be proper to inform the reader that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the *Leeds Journal*, without the author's privity.' The hand was that of the Rev. J. Newton: who, in a letter to Mr. J. Thornton, dated March 13, 1779, and afterwards printed in the Congregational Magazine, sent him a copy of this poem; stating that it was versified from the tale of 'The Mahometan Hog,' which he had told to Cowper. He adds, 'He did it in about an hour. It gives a proof that his faculties are no ways hurt by his long illness, and likewise that the taste and turn of his mind are still the same. The six lines included in brackets are an addition of mine.' These are here retained, because Cowper reproduced them in 1782.

THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

Poems, 1782, p. 330.

Written in Sept. 1779. (See letter to Hill, Oct. 2. 1779.)

THE PROMOTION OF LORD THURLOW.

Poems, 1782, p. 309.

Written in Nov. 1779—'I should offend against the cordiality of our former friendship, should I send a volume into the world and forget how much I am bound to pay my particular respects to your Lordship upon that occasion. Among the pieces which I have the honour to send, there is one for which I must entreat your pardon. The best excuse I can make is, that it flowed almost spontaneously from the affectionate remembrance of a connexion that did me so much honour.'—*To Thurlow*, Feb. 25, 1782.

Edward Thurlow (born 1732, died 1806) was eldest son of the Rev.

Thomas Thurlow, Rector of Little Ashfield, Suffolk. He was educated at the King's School, Canterbury, and at Caius College, Cambridge; and about the year 1750 we find him as a fellow-clerk with Cowper, in Mr. Chapman's office. (Cp. Life, vol. ii. pp. x, xi, xxix, xxxiv.) Called to the Bar in 1754, he became a King's Counsel in 1761, M.P. for Tamworth in 1768, Solicitor General in 1770, Attorney General in 1771; and Lord High Chancellor in 1778, being raised to the Peerage by the title of Lord Thurlow of Ashfield, June 3, 1778. In 1782, when Rockingham's Administration succeeded Lord North's, Thurlow retained the Seals by the special desire of the King (whose favour he had secured by his support of North's American policy), and in spite of the opposition of Fox: but when, on Rockingham's death, the coalition was formed between Fox and North, in Feb. 1783, the Great Seal was held in commission. On the formation of Pitt's Ministry, however, in the same year, Thurlow was again appointed as Chancellor, Dec. 23, 1783, and retained the office till his retirement in 1792. 'The principles of Thurlow,' says Lord Stanhope, 'were those of the brave old Cavaliers—for Church and King. There was that in him which over-awed and daunted his contemporaries. It was a saying of Mr. Fox, that no man ever yet was so wise as Thurlow looked. His countenance was fraught with sense; his aspect stately and commanding, his brow broad, massy, and armed with terrors like that of the Olympian Jove. His voice, loud, sonorous, and as rolling thunder in the distance, augmented the effect of his fierce and terrible invective. Perhaps no modern English statesman, in the House of Lords at least, was ever so much dreaded.'—Hist. Eng., ed. 1858, v. 295.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

Poems, 1782, p. 313.

Written in Feb. 1780. Cowper tells Unwin that on writing this piece he 'was not quite pleased with a line or two, which he found it difficult to mend, and therefore did not.' 'At night,' he continues, 'I read Mr. Burke's speech in the newspaper, and was so well pleased with his proposals for a reformation, and with the temper in which he made them, that I began to think better of his cause, and burnt my verses. Such is the lot of the man who writes upon the subject of the day; the aspect of affairs changes in an hour or two, and his opinion with it. What was just and well-deserved satire in the morning, in the evening becomes a libel; the author commences his own judge, and while he condemns with unrelenting severity what he so lately approved, is sorry to find that he has laid his leaf-gold upon touchwood, which crumbled away under his fingers.'—(Feb. 27 1780).

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

Poems 1782, p. 326.

Written in Feb. 1780. 'My whisking wit has produced the following, the subject of which is more important than the manner in which I have treated it seems to imply: but a fable may speak truth, and all truth is sterling. I only premise, that in a philosophical tract in the Register, I found it asserted that the glow-worm is the nightingale's food.'—*To Unwin*, Feb. 27, 1780.

THE DOVES.

Poems, 1782, p. 299.

Written in May, 1780. 'The male Dove was smoking a pipe, and the female Dove was sewing, while she delivered herself as above. This little circumstance may lead you perhaps to guess what pair I had in my eye.' *To Mrs. Newton*, June, 1780. Probably Mr. and Mrs. Bull, to whom Mr. Newton had introduced Cowper in Dec. 1779, on leaving Olney for London. See Life, vol. ii. p. xxv, and cp. note on Conversation, l. 251.

LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY.

Poems, 1782, p. 318.

Written June 22, 1780: under which date the Poet wrote to Unwin, 'Before I arose this morning, I composed the three following stanzas; I send them because I like them pretty well myself.'

William Murray, fourth son of David fifth Viscount Stormont, was born March 2, (1705). He was a King's Scholar at Westminster School, and Student of Christ Church, Oxford; was called to the Bar in 1730; became Solicitor General in 1742, and Attorney General in 1754; and in 1756 was appointed Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, an office which he held till his resignation in 1788, five years before his death in 1793. He was created Lord Mansfield of Mansfield, co. Notts, in 1756, and Earl of Mansfield in 1776. He rendered himself unpopular by his severity in the trials of the publishers of Junius' Letters, and of John Wilkes; and by charging a Jury to acquit a priest who was convicted of the crime of celebrating Mass. His house in Bloomsbury Square was consequently burnt down by the No-Popery mob in the Gordon Riots, on Tuesday, June 6, 1780 (see Introd., §. 3, and cp. Table Talk, l. 312.) 'Then perished an excellent library, formed by one of the most accomplished scholars of his age; books enriched by the handwriting of Pope and Bolingbroke, and of

his other literary friends, or by his own notes upon the margin. Then was lost an invaluable collection of familiar letters which Lord Mansfield had been storing for wellnigh half a century, as materials, it was said, for Memoirs of his Times.'—(Stanhope, Hist. Eng., ed. 1858, vii. 29). He refused to accept the compensation for his losses voted by the House of Commons. Cowper thought very highly of him. 'I would give much to be able to communicate to Flaxman the perfect idea that I have of the subject, such as he was forty years ago. He was at that time wonderfully handsome, and would expound the most mysterious intricacies of the law, and recapitulate both matter and evidence of a cause as long as from hence to Eartham, with an intelligent smile on his features, that bespoke plainly the perfect ease with which he did it. The most abstruse studies (I believe) never cost him any labour.'—*To Hayley*, Aug. 7. 1793.

'l. 1. *The Vandals*, a Germanic race, and probably of Gothic stock, have made their name proverbial by their ruthless destruction of works of art, when they sacked Rome under Genseric, A.D. 455.

ON A GOLDFINCH.

Poems, 1782, p. 329.

Written in the summer of 1780. 'The tragical occasion of it really happened at the house next to ours. I am glad when I can find a subject to work upon: a lapidary I suppose accounts it a laborious part of his business to rub away the roughness of the stone; but it is my amusement, and if after all the polishing I can give it, it discovers some little lustre, I think myself well rewarded for my pains.'—*To Unwin*, Nov. 9, 1780.

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE.

Poems, 1782, p. 315.

Written in Dec. 1780. The MS., preserved in the British Museum, is thus entitled:

'Nose Plf; Eyes Deft;
Vid. Plowden folio 6,000.'

'Happy is the man who knows just so much of the law, as to make himself a little merry now and then with the solemnity of judicial proceedings. I have heard of common-law judgments before now, indeed have been present at the delivery of some, that, according to my poor apprehension, while they paid the utmost respect to the letter of a statute, have departed widely from the spirit of it; and, being governed entirely by the point of law, have left equity, reason, and common-sense behind them at an infinite distance. You

will judge whether the following report of a case, drawn up by myself, be not a proof and illustration of this satirical assertion.'—*To Hill*, Dec. 25, 1780.

TABLE TALK.

This and the seven pieces that follow it were published in 1782: see Life, vol. ii. pp. xxvi, xxvii. Table Talk was written in Dec. 1780, and was sent to Mr. Newton, Feb. 18, 1781. It was not the first poem of the series in order of composition, but was placed first in the volume, because 'the subjects of it are perhaps more popular; and one would wish, at the first setting out, to catch the public by the ear, and hold them by it as fast as possible, that they may be willing to hear one on a second and a third occasion'—*To Newton*, March 5, 1781. 'It is a medley of many things, some that may be useful, and some that, for aught I know, may be very diverting. I am merry that I may decoy people into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it. Now and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the opportunity that disguise procures me, to drop a word in favour of religion. In short, there is some froth, and here and there a bit of sweet-meat, which seems to entitle it justly to the name of a certain dish the ladies call a trifle. I did not choose to be more facetious, lest I should consult the taste of my readers at the expense of my own approbation; nor more serious than I have been, lest I should forfeit theirs.' —*To Newton*, Feb. 18, 1781. 'My sole drift is to be useful: a point which, however, I knew I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have therefore fixed these two strings upon my bow, and by the help of both have done my best to send my arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh, before they will be called upon to correct that levity, and peruse me with a more serious air. As to the effect, I leave it alone in His hands, who can alone produce it'—*To Mrs. Cowper*, Oct. 19, 1781.

l. 6. It was a 'commonly received Tenent' that 'Bayes will protect from the mischief of lightning and thunder; a quality ascribed thereto common with the fig-tree, Ægle, and skin of a Seale.'—Sir T. Browne's Vulg. Errors, Bk. ii. ch. vi. § 6. Suetonius tells us that the Emperor Tiberius used to wear a wreath of laurel during tempestuous weather:—'Tonitrua praeter modum expavescebat, et turbatiore caelo nunquam non coronam lauream capite gestavit, quod fulmine afflari negatur id genus frondis'—Vit. Tib., cap. 69. And Pliny, in his chapter entitled 'Quae non feriantur fulmine,' writes: 'Ex iis, quae terra gignuntur, lauri fruticem non icit.'—Nat. Hist. ii. 57.

l. 13. *Parnassian dews.* Parnassus was a mountain near Delphi, having two summits, whereof one was sacred to Apollo and the Muses, and the

other to Bacchus. It was believed that whosoever slept on Mount Parnassus became either an inspired poet, or mad. To 'climb Parnassus' is a proverbial expression signifying 'to write poetry.'

l. 30. *The wretch;*—probably Frederick the Great of Prussia.

ll. 47–82. Cp. The Task, v. 331–62.

ll. 63–82. An eulogy on King George III.

l. 79. Cp. l. 279.

l. 94. This story is not to be found in the Visions of Hell, or in any other of the acknowledged works of Don Francisco Gomez de Quevedo (born at Madrid, 1580; died 1645): and Southey remarks, 'Certainly no such *sober tale* would ever have been allowed to pass by the censors of the press in Spain'—S. v. 97.

l. 109. Chaucer is said to have assumed, on his return from abroad, the title of Poet Laureate; and in 12 Ric. II. 1389, he obtained a grant of an annual allowance of wine. In 1615 James I. granted to his Laureate a yearly pension of 100 marks; and in 1630 this stipend was increased by a patent of Charles I. to £100 per annum, with an additional grant of one tierce of canary to be taken yearly out of the king's store of wine. On Southey's appointment to the Laureateship, this tierce of canary was commuted to an additional £27 of income. (Haydn's Dict. of Dates). The title of Poet Laureate is supposed to be derived from an ancient custom in our Universities, of presenting a laurel wreath to graduates in Rhetorick and Poetry. Amongst those who have held this office we find the names of Spenser, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Southey, Wordsworth, and Tennyson.

l. 110. *quit-rent;*—a nominal, or very small reserved rent—sometimes no more than a 'peppercorn'—on payment of which the occupant of a manor was 'quit,' or free of all further charges.

l. 144. Cp. l. 192.

l. 158. Cp. Tacit. Agric. cap. 27: 'Iniquissima haec bellorum condicio est: prospera omnes sibi vindicant, adversa uni imputantur.' Aeschyl. Sept. cont. Theb. 4–8:

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ πράξαιμεν αἰτία θεῶν·
> εἰ δ' αὖθ', ὃ μὴ γένοιτο, συμφορὰ τύχοι,
> Ἐτεοκλέης ἂν εἷς πολὺς κατὰ πτόλιν
> ὑμνοῖθ' ὑπ' ἀστῶν φροιμίοις πολυρρόθοις.

Ant. and Cleop. v. 2:

> 'Be it known that we the greatest are misthought
> For things that others do, and when we fall
> We answer others' merits in our name.'

Coriol. i. 1:

> 'for what miscarries
> Shall be the general's fault, though he perform
> To th' utmost of a man.'

And Robert Herrick:

'In battles what disàsters fall,
The king he bears the blame of all.'

l. 183. If any man would 'assay to turn the course' of streams, it was James Brindley (born 1716, died 1772), who, being asked before a Committee of the House what he thought was the use and purpose of rivers, is said to have replied, 'To feed navigable canals.' Bred up as a farm-labourer, and afterwards apprenticed to a millwright, he in 1758–9 commenced the 'Bridgewater Canal.' It was so named from Francis Egerton, third and last Duke of Bridgewater (born 1736, died 1803), who has been termed the 'Father of British Inland Navigation;' and its object was to facilitate the transport of coals from the Duke's estates at Worsley, to Manchester.

Helicon was a mountain in Boeotia, near the Gulf of Corinth, and was sacred to Apollo and the Muses, whose Grove was on the summit of it. At first sight, therefore, the expression to 'turn the course of Helicon' seems incorrect. But on the mount were the famous fountains of the Muses, called Hippocrene and Aganippe: and Gray has reminded us that

'From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take.'

(Progress of Poesy, l. 3.)

l. 184. *The Nine*;—the Muses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory). They were named Clio (the Muse of history), Euterpe (of music), Thalia (of comedy), Melpomene (of tragedy), Terpsichore (of dancing), Erato (of lyric poetry), Polyhymnia (of singing), Calliope (of epic poetry), and Urania (of astronomy).

ll. 193–6. The allusion is probably to Admiral Keppel, and the Generals engaged in the American War. Cp. The Task, i. 771–4; ii. 225–32; iv. 25–7; and see Introd. § 3. 'Pitt himself could have done nothing with such tools: but he would not have been so betrayed; he would have made the traitors answer with their heads, for their cowardice or supineness, and their punishment would have made survivors active.'—*To Unwin* (1781) S. ii. 378.

l. 199. The *Syrens*, or more properly *Sirens*, were sea-nymphs who allured mariners passing their island by the beauty of their song, which was such as to constrain them to land to their destruction. Hence their name of *Sirenes*, the Entanglers or inveiglers; from Gr. σειρά, a chain or entanglement (though Mr. Keightley suggests the derivation from the Semitic *Shir*, song). Homer knew of only two Sirens, who resided on an island near Cape Pelorus in Sicily. Odysseus and his companions passed them in safety on their homeward voyage. By Circe's advice Odysseus stopped the ears of his crew with wax, and had himself lashed on to the mast; and thus he was the only mortal who escaped after hearing the song of the Sirens (Hom. Odys. xii. 166–200). This mortified them so much, that they cast themselves into the sea and

perished. The later poets spoke of three Sirenes, who were said to be daughters of the river-god Achelous by the Muse Calliope; and were represented under the form of women above the waist, while the lower parts of their body were those of a bird of prey.

ll. 217–30. 'Mr. Venn . . said that one passage in particular had absolutely electrified him, meaning the description of the Briton in Table Talk. I was glad to have that picture noticed by a man of a cultivated mind, because I had always thought well of it myself.'—*To Unwin*, Sept. 11, 1784.

l. 309. *Olympic speed.* The horse and chariot races held an important place in the famous Olympic Games, which were celebrated every fifth year on the plains of Olympia in Elis. These Games are said to have been instituted by Hercules in honour of Jupiter Olympius, B.C. 1222; and from them was named the era of the Greeks, which was reckoned by periods of four years, each period being called an Olympiad. This computation began B.C. 776, and ceased with the 305th Olympiad, A.D. 440.

l. 312. In the Gordon Riots of 1780 (see Introd. § 3, and cp. note on the Burning of Lord Mansfield's Library) the leniency of the magistrates was generally censured as proceeding from pusillanimity. The Lord Mayor, Kennett, was prosecuted by the Attorney General before the Privy Council, March 10, 1781, on a charge of gross inactivity during these riots. On Gordon's acquittal, Cowper wrote, before reading the trial, 'Let us know upon what point his acquittal turned, for at present I am rather at a loss to conceive how he could escape if the law was allowed to take its course, uninterrupted by fear and uncontrolled by a spirit of party.' And after perusing the trial, he proceeds, 'I can only add to what I said before, in the words of Horace,

"Miror quo facto judicium illud
Fugerit."'

To Unwin, Feb. 6, 1781. Cp. The Task, iv. 600–3.

l. 342. Chatham did not quite 'die upon the stage.' He sank in an apoplectic fit on the floor of the House of Lords, whilst delivering his last speech, April 8, 1778; and died at Hayes on May 14 following. Cp. The Task, ii. 235–48.

l. 361. Judges vii. 9–22.

l. 362. *Subserviency* is here used in its proper meaning of 'obedient service,' not in its perverted modern sense of 'servility.' A similar moral degeneration has taken place, or is taking place, in too many of our words: such as 'officious,' 'cunning,' 'resentment,' 'censure,' 'misunderstanding.' Cp. Trench's Study of Words, Lect. ii.

l. 363. Cp. Expostulation, ll. 272, 694.

l. 375. Cp. Expostulation, l. 346. So King Henry in Henry V, iv. 8:

'O God, thy arm was here,
And not to us, but to thy arm alone
Ascribe we all . . . .

. . . . Take it, God!
For it is thine alone.'

l. 385. Dr. John Brown, of St John's College, Cambridge, and successively Minor Canon and Lecturer at Carlisle, Rector of Great Horkesley near Colchester, and Vicar of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was born in 1715. In 1757 he published his Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times. This work, which Churchill calls 'the Feverette of Brown' (The Ghost, iv. 750), 'was universally received, admired, and believed. The author fully convinced his readers that they were a race of cowards and scoundrels; that nothing could save them; that they were on the point of being enslaved by their enemies; and that they richly deserved their fate. Such were the speculations to which ready credence was given at the outset of the most glorious war in which England had ever been engaged.'—Macaulay's Essays, 'William Pitt' (vol. i. 302, ed. 1854). The 'Estimate' ran through seven editions in one year. Brown wrote much besides, in prose and verse: especially, Essays on the Characteristics of Lord Shaftsbury, 1751; a Dialogue of the Dead, between Pericles and Cosmo, 1760; a Dissertation on the Rise, Progress, and Power of Poetry and Music, 1763; and Sermons, 1764. Ill health compelled him to refuse an invitation from the Empress, in 1766, to visit St. Petersburgh, with a view to organize a scheme of public education: and in September of the same year he committed suicide, in a fit of insanity.

l. 420. *Tale;*—number 'told out' (cp. Truth, l. 83) or reckoned. See Exod. v. 8, 18 (in both which places the Septuagint renders by *σύνταξις*), 1 Sam. xviii. 27 (where the reading followed by the LXX. differs), 1 Chron. ix. 28 (where the 'by tale' of the Authorised Version is *ἐν ἀριθμῷ* in the Greek).

l. 501. *Name;*—viz. 'Vates' (from old Gr. *ἥτης*, for *φήτης*, *φάτης*). Cp. Sir John Denham's Progress of Learning, l. 77:

'Twas certainly mysterious that the name
Of prophets and of poets is the same.'

l. 507. *six and five;*—the hexameters and pentameters of the schoolboy's Latin verses.

l. 509. In a letter to Unwin, quoted in Life (cp. vol. ii. p. ix), Cowper tells how, as 'a schoolboy in high favour with his master,' he 'received a silver groat for his exercise.' Southey tells us that in his own days at Westminster, under Dr. Vincent, the boys were still rewarded with silver pence: 'and those pence produced still "goodlier guerdon," by an established rate of exchange at which the mistress of the boarding-house received them, and returned current coin in the proportion of six to one. My first literary profits,' he adds, 'were thus obtained.' The present Head-Master, the Rev. Dr. Scott, has obliged the editor with the information that 'there is a gift of two pounds yearly in Maundy money, for the Westminster scholars,

bestowed on Thursday in Holy Week:' and this gift, he believes, will be found to go back to Queen Elizabeth's time. The Doctor proceeds: 'The coins (*1d. 2d. 3d. 4d.*) are given away at the Head Master's discretion, the chief largess being at the time of "School Epigrams," at Election (Whitsuntide): when two theses are given out, and the boys produce epigrams, for which (if good) silver pence are given,—a whole set, 1, 2, 3, 4, being the highest recompence. I also give these pence as rewards for creditable exercises from time to time. The *3d.* and *4d.* are less prized since coins of the realm have borne these values; the Maundy *3d.* being identical with the ordinary silver coin.'

l. 525. Cp. Truth, l. 70.

l. 528. When S. Dunstan's Church was rebuilt in 1831, these figures were sold, and were set up to adorn 'S. Dunstan's Villa,' Regent's Park.

l. 548. *Push-pin;*—old name for the game now called 'spillikens.'

l. 554. From 'pounce,' *v. tr.* (Spanish *poncar;* Italian *poncettare*), to pierce or perforate (whence our modern verb, to *punch*), we get 'pounce,' *sb.* (Ital. *ponzone*), the claw or talon of a bird of prey: and hence 'to pounce,' *v. tr.*, to seize with the talons.

l. 557–60. From Dryden's lines 'Under Mr. Milton's Picture before his Paradise Lost':

> 'Three poets, in three distant ages born,
> Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
> The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
> The next in majesty; in both the last.
> The force of nature could no further go;
> To make a third, she join'd the other two.'

l. 557. *Mantuan swan;*—Virgil, born at Andes, a village near Mantua, about B.C. 70. He is called a swan, in allusion to the old belief in the musical note of that bird, especially in the moment of death—a belief to which Virgil himself often refers (e.g. Aen. vii. 698–702, xi. 458; Ecl. ix.27–37.) So Ben Jonson apostrophizes Shakspeare as 'Sweet Swan of Avon.'

l. 604. The *thyrsus* was a pole carried by Dionysos (Bacchus), and by Satyrs, Maenades, and others who bore a part in the Bacchic rites. It was entwined with leaves of the vine and ivy, and was terminated by a pine-apple, or fir-cone.

l. 609. *Bedlam* is a corruption of Bethlehem. In 1247 Simon Fitz Mary founded a religious house under the patronage of 'St. Mary of Bethlehem,' in the parish of S. Botolph Without, Bishopsgate Street. At the dissolution of the monasteries this house was granted by Henry VIII. to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London, and incorporated in 1547, under the name of Bethlehem Hospital, as an asylum for the pauper lunatics of the City.

l. 610. Cowper, though an avowed Whig in his politics, had a strange prejudice against Cromwell. Few men could be found in this day to write

as he did to Mr. Newton (March 6, 1782):—'How have I seen sensible and learned men burn incense to the memory of Oliver Cromwell, ascribing to him, as the greatest hero of the world, the dignity of the British Empire during the interregnum. A century passed before that idol, which seemed to be of gold, was proved to be a wooden one. He would have thought it little worth his while to have broken through all obligations, divine and human, to have wept crocodile tears, and wrapped himself up in the obscurity of speeches that nobody could understand, could he have foreseen that in the ensuing century a lady's scissars [Mrs. Macaulay's] would clip his laurels close, and expose his naked villany to the scorn of all posterity. This however has been accomplished; and so effectually, that I suppose it is not in the power of the most artificial management to make them grow again. Even the sagacious of mankind are blind when Providence leaves them to be deluded; so blind, that a tyrant shall be mistaken for a true patriot, true patriots (such were the Long Parliament) shall be abhorred as tyrants, and almost a whole nation shall dream, that they had the full enjoyment of liberty, for years after such a crafty knave as Oliver shall have stolen it completely from them.'

l. 629. *Circe;*—the sorceress of Aeaea,

'whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine.' (Comus, 50.)

Her enchantments wrought this transformation on twenty-two of the companions of Odysseus, when he visited her island on his return from Troy. Cp. Progress of Error, l. 580.

l. 655. Cp. Conversation, l. 789. 'Pope was certainly a mechanical maker of verses; with the unwearied application of a plodding Flemish painter, who draws a shrimp with the most minute exactness, he had all the genius of one of the first masters. Never, I believe, were such talents and such drudgery united.'—*To Unwin*, Jan. 5, 1782. Referring to the above couplet, Macaulay remarks: 'Alfieri speaks with similar scorn of the tragedies of his predecessors, "Mi cadevano dalle mani per la languidezza, triviali tà e prolissità dei modi e del verso, senza parlare poi della snervatezza dei pensieri. Or perchè mai questa nostra divina lingua sì maschia anco, ed energica, e feroce, in bocca di Dante, dovra ella farsi così sbia data ed eunucea nell dia logo tragico?"'—Essay on Moore's Byron, vol. i. p. 158, ed. 1854; where see a curious literary parallel between two men so opposite in personal character as Cowper and Alfieri.

l. 657. John Arbuthnot, M.D. (of Aberdeen), F. Coll. Phys., F.R.S. (born at Arbuthnot near Montrose, 1675; died 1735) was the son of a Scottish Episcopal clergyman, and made his first appearance in London as a teacher of mathematics. In 1709 he was appointed Physician in Ordinary to Queen Anne, and became celebrated as a man of science, literature, and wit. In

conjunction with his friends Pope and Swift, he commenced a satire on the abuse of human learning, under the title of Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus; which however did not proceed far. Cowper here writes the name *Árbuthnot*, as does Pope in his Epistle to Arbuthnot, l. 133; and this is the correct Scottish pronunciation. Yet in his Farewell to London, v. 4, Pope places the accent on the second syllable—*Arbúthnot;* which seems to show that even in his own day the name was pronounced in both ways indifferently.

l. 662. Cp. Homer, Iliad i. 262:

οὐ γάρ πω τοίους ἴδον ἀνέρας οὐδὲ ἴδωμαι
οἷον Πειρίθοον, κ.τ.λ.

Soph. Trachin, 810–12:

τὴν θέμιν σὺ προύβαλες,
πάντων ἄριστον ἄνδρα τῶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ
κτείνασ', ὁποῖον ἄλλον οὐκ ὄψει ποτέ.

Horat. Carm. i. 24, 8:

'Quando ullum inveniet parem?'

Virgil, Aen. vi. 87.

'Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata neque ultra
Esse sinent.'

Hamlet, i. 2:

'He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.'

Cymbeline, i. 1:

'A creature, such
As to seek through the regions of the earth
For one his like, there would be something failing
In him that should compare.'

Dryden, Absal. and Achit., part i. 860:

'Now take thy steepy flight from heaven, and see
If thou canst find on earth another he:—
Another he would be too hard to find;
See then whom thou canst see not far behind.'

l. 672. Charles Churchill (born at Westminster 1731; died at Boulogne 1764) was the contemporary and friend of Cowper at Westminster School, and was afterwards associated with him as a fellow-member of the Nonsense Club (see Life, vol. ii. pp. x, xv). Whilst yet at school, he entered into an imprudent matrimonial engagement, which was followed by a 'Fleet marriage,' and turned out unhappily. Having failed to obtain admission at Oxford, he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, but very soon left the University. He however received Holy Orders in 1756, and two years later succeeded his father in the curacy of St. John's, Westminster. Owing to reckless and improvident habits he abandoned the exercise of his sacred profession, and began his career as an author and wit. His first poem, 'The Conclave,'

was a severe satire on the Dean and Chapter of Westminster; and was so scurrilous that it had to be suppressed. Churchill rose to immediate fame by the publication of The Rosciad (1761); and this was followed by several other satirical poems, which were received with much applause by his contemporaries, though they are little read now. Cowper's extravagant admiration for him as a poet, was probably owing in part to the associations of school-life. 'It is a great thing to be indeed a poet, and does not happen to more than one man in a century; but Churchill, the great Churchill, deserved that name of poet. He is indeed a careless writer for the most part; but where shall we find in any of those authors who finished their works with the exactness of a Flemish pencil, those bold and daring strokes of fancy, those numbers so hazardously ventured upon and so happily finished, the matter so compressed and yet so clear, and the colouring so sparingly laid on, and yet with such a beautiful effect? . . . I cannot help regretting that he died so soon. Those words of Virgil, upon the immature death of Marcellus, might serve for his epitaph:

"Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent."'

To Unwin (S. iii. 350).

ll. 672-92. Cp. Churchill's own estimate of his literary character, in Gotham, Book ii. 165-86.

l. 693. *Naiads*;—see note on The Task, i. 328 (vol. ii. p. 226).

l. 717. 'I think Dr. Johnson a little mistaken in his notion, that divine subjects have never been poetically treated with success. A little more Christian knowledge and experience would perhaps enable him to discover excellent poetry upon spiritual themes.'—*To Newton*, Oct. 4, 1781.

l. 718. Cp. Butler's Hudibras, part ii. cant. l. 571:

'Where'er you tread, your foot shall set
The primrose and the violet.'

Young, Night Thoughts, ii. 327:

'Shall I see glories beaming from his brow?
Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?'

R. Herrick, The Poet's Good Wishes for the Duke of York, l. 13:

'May his soft foot where it treads
Gardens thence produce and meads;
And those meadows full be set
With the rose and violet.'

And his Epithalamium to Sir T. Southwell:

'May all like flowery meads
Smell where your soft foot treads.'

l. 735. Cp. Isaiah vi. 6, 7.

l. 760. Thomas Sternhold, groom of the robes to Henry VIII. and Edward VI., had, at the time of the revision of the Prayer Book in 1551-2,

translated thirty-seven of the Psalms into English metre; to which he afterwards added fifteen others. After his death in 1553, the Psalter was completed by Hopkins and others; was published in 1562; and was commonly used in churches until superseded by the New Version of Nicholas Brady, D.D. and Nahum Tate, P.L., which was licensed by William III. in 1696.

l. 764. *Prior's ease.* Matthew Prior (born 1664, died 1721) who was himself an old Westminster, was a favourite poet with Cowper. 'To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic,—to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior.'—*To Unwin,* Jan. 17, 1782.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

This poem was the first of the series written, the subject being that originally proposed by Mrs. Unwin. It was begun in December 1780, and sent to Mr. Newton in January 1781.

l. 25. Cp. Truth, l. 17.

l. 35. Cp. Romans ii. 15.

l. 43. Cp. l. 239.

l. 64. Cp. Shakspeare's 'dying fall,' Twelfth Night i. 1.

l. 77. Cp. Scott's Lay of Last Minstrel, iii. 2:

'Love rules the court, the camp, the grove.
And men below, and saints above:
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.'

l. 84. *Nimrod;*—the 'mighty hunter,' Gen. x. 9.

l. 98. The secondary and metaphorical use of the word 'eccentric,' is so common, that the young student may require to be reminded of its primary use in the science of astronomy. Derived from the Greek ἐκ (out of) and κέντρον (a centre), it means 'deviating from the centre,' and is applied to those heavenly bodies which do not revolve round the sun as a centre, in the same way that our earth does. Sir Isaac Newton writes, 'Planets move all one and the same way in orbs *concentrick*, while comets move all manner of ways in orbs very *eccentrick*.'

l. 100. That *comets* are omens of disaster, 'importing change of times and states' (1 Henry VI, i. 1), and that they

'from their horrid hair
Shake pestilence and war' (Paradise Lost ii. 710),

is an ancient belief which still lingers in the minds of uneducated persons amongst us.

l. 121. Monmouth Street, in St. Giles', London (afterwards known as Dudley Street), was famous for its old-clothes shops; for which its name became proverbial, as that of Grub Street did as the abode of literary hacks, and of Wardour Street for modern-antique furniture and armour.

l. 124. *Occiduus;*—supposed to be Charles Wesley. 'I am sorry to find that the censure I have passed upon Occiduus is even better founded than I supposed. Lady Austen has been at his sabbatical concerts, which it seems are composed of song-tunes and psalm-tunes indiscriminately; music without words—and I suppose one may say, consequently without devotion.'—*To Newton*, Sept. 9, 1781.

l. 130. Daniel iii. 1–5.

l. 153. The concrete substantive *buffoon* seems to have here the very unusual sense of the abstract 'buffoonery.'

l. 157. Isaiah lvi. 2; lviii. 13, 14.

l. 168. Cp. St. Luke xiv. 17–20.

l. 180. *Elysium*, or 'the Elysian fields';—the classical Paradise, or abode of the virtuous departed; placed by Homer in the West, on the border of the ocean stream; by Hesiod and Pindar in 'the Fortunate Islands,' or 'Isles of the Blessed,' in the western ocean; and by Virgil in the nether world, to which the entrance was from a cave on the shores of Lake Avernus, in Campania. Cp. 'Elysian scenes': Retirement, l. 199.

l. 184. *Comus* was the god of revelry.

l. 188. *Clodis;*—a name adapted from that of Publius Clodius, a Roman of licentious and abandoned character, and the intimate associate of the conspirator Catiline. His profligacy made his name proverbial for sensual excesses, and he was degraded from the patrician rank to plebeian.

l. 189. *Rufillus;*—the name of a man ridiculed by Horace for effeminacy, Satires, lib. i. 2. 27, 'Pastillos Rufillus olet.'

l. 190. 'The Ladies' Etiquette' was probably the name of a popular manual of polite behaviour, in use amongst the fops of Cowper's day.

l. 215. Daniel i. 11–16.

l. 231. *Tantalus* was a king of Lydia, and son of Zeus, by the nymph Pluto. It is said that he stole nectar and ambrosia when admitted to a banquet with the gods; and then imparted them to mortals. For this offence he was condemned to stand up to his neck in a lake of water, which flowed away from his lips whenever he attempted to drink of it; while just above his head hung a bough laden with luscious fruit, but which the wind blew from his reach whenever he sought to pluck and eat. (Hom. Od. xi. 581). We owe to this legend the English word 'to tantalize.'

l. 267. Cp. Young's Night Thoughts, vii. 291–302:

> 'Go, mock majesty!
> And bow to thy superiors of the stall;
> Their good is good entire, unmix'd, unmarr'd,

They find a Paradise in every field,
On boughs forbidden where no curses hang,' &c.

l. 270. Cp. l. 564.

l. 280. *Cæsar's image.* Cp. St. Matt. xxii. 20, 21.

l. 314. *Rake-hell;*—dissolute, improvident: from Fr. *racaille*, the rabble. Chaucer writes the word as 'rakel' and 'rakle.' There was also the form 'rakehelly.' Thus E. K., in his Epistle Dedicatory prefixed to Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar, speaks of 'the *rakehelly* rout of our ragged rhymers.' By his use of the hyphen, Cowper shows that he regarded this as a compound word. The sound of it made this error a natural one, at a very early date. Thus Ben Jonson speaks of 'a sort of lewd *rake-hells*, that fear neither for God nor the devil.' (Every Man in his Humour, iv. 3.)

l. 323. Cp. Expostulation, l. 654. So G. Herbert, Church Porch:

'A verse may find him, who a sermon flies.'

l. 335. *Petronius;*—a Roman who was equally a lover of letters and of pleasure, and was the 'Arbiter' of taste and fashion in the profligate court of Nero ('elegantiae arbiter,' Tac. Ann. xvi. 18). His name here designates Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, K.G. (born 1694, died 1773). He was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1745, and Secretary of State 1746-8; and it was he who, after his retirement from office, carried the reform of the Calendar in 1751 (from which year the Gregorian or 'New Style' dates in Great Britain). Lord Chesterfield's famous Letters to his Son, here referred to, were written to his natural son Philip Stanhope, who died in 1768; and were published by the widow of the latter in 1774. The work and its author were naturally condemned by Cowper, on account of the low standard of morals exhibited in the letters.

l. 362. A *forester* here means a forest-tree. So Evelyn: 'This niceness is more conspicuous in flowers, and the herbaceous offspring, than in *foresters*.'

ll. 373, 4. The form in which this couplet was originally written was as follows:—

'With memorandum-book to minute down
The several posts, and where the chaise broke down.'

On discovering the obvious error, the poet wrote: 'Here, the reviewers would say, is not only "down," but "down, derry down" into the bargain, the word being made to rhyme to itself. This never occurred to me till last night, just as I was stepping into bed.'—*To Newton*, July 7, 1781.

l. 429. Cp. l. 504.

l. 441. *tar;*—of which coachmen usually carried a supply, to grease their wheels.

l. 485. Anthony van Leuwenhoek (born at Delft, 1632; died 1723) spent his long life in microscopic observations, principally directed to the study of comparative anatomy, and conducted with single lenses of his own polishing. The results of his investigations were printed in the Philo-

sophical Transactions of our Royal Society, of which he was elected a Fellow in the year 1680.

l. 508. *The priest;*—the Rev. Martin Madan (born 1726, died 1790), a son of Col. Martin Madan, M.P. (by the poet's aunt, Judith, daughter of Spencer Cowper), and brother of Dr. Spencer Madan, successively Bishop of Bristol (1792–4) and Peterborough (1794–1813). He was called to the Bar, but afterwards entered into Holy Orders, and became Chaplain of the Lock Hospital (a refuge for fallen women, established 1746). The paragraph, l. 490–510, refers to Madan's 'Thelyphthora: or a treatise on Female Ruin, in its Causes, Effects, Consequences, Prevention, and Remedy,' 2 vols. 1780. The object of this infamous book was to vindicate polygamy (in the case of the man) on the authority of Scripture, and to defend adultery and fornication on physical and moral grounds. Cowper, who had previously held his cousin in high estimation, and had applied to him for spiritual counsel at the time of his first attack of depression in the Temple, published anonymously in 1781 a poem called Anti-Thelypthora, and wrote three or four smaller pieces on the same subject, all of which are of inferior merit.

l. 516. Cp. The Task, ii. l. 285.

l. 526. *One;*—Pygmalion, a statuary of Cyprus. He had taken a vow of celibacy, but became so enamoured of his own statue of Venus, that at his prayer the goddess changed the ivory into a woman, whom he married. See Ovid, Met. x. 243–97.

l. 538. These three great men were not less distinguished for their Christian principles and godly lives, than they were for their philosophical insight and grasp of thought. Sir Isaac Newton was born 1642, and died 1727; the Hon. Robert Boyle, born 1626, died 1691; and John Locke, born 1632, died 1704.

l. 600. Cp. Job xxxviii. 11.

l. 609. Cp. 2 Thess. ii. 11.

TRUTH.

Written in January 1781. 'I wrote the poem called "Truth," by which is intended Religious Truth, . . . on purpose to inculcate the eleemosynary character of the Gospel, as a dispensation of mercy, in the most absolute sense of the word, to the exclusion of all claims of merit on the part of the receiver.'—*To Unwin*, June 24, 1781. Thinking that the theology of this poem might prove an obstacle to the reception of his volume, Cowper applied to Mr. Newton for a preface to it. 'It is so true, that it can hardly fail of giving offence to an unenlightened reader. I think therefore that in order to obviate in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody so

well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it. Or . . I should be glad to be indebted to you for the preface to the whole.'—*To Newton*, April 8, 1781. The latter suggestion was adopted, but as the publisher thought Mr. Newton's preface more likely to endanger the sale of the book than any of the poems contained in it, it was not inserted till the edition of 1790.

ll. 1–6. Cp. The Task, ll. 447-54.

l. 51. Cp. St. Matt. xi. 19.

l. 53. Cp. St. Matt. vi. 5.

l. 80. From Comus, l. 390:

'For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish?'

l. 83. *Adust*;—scorched, parched. So 'the Libyan air adust,' Paradise Lost, xii. 635. The word is now usually applied in a medical or philosophical sense, to the complexion or humours of the body.

l. 117. Cp. l. 166.

l. 119. Spencer Cowper, second son of William, first Earl Cowper, and first cousin to the poet's father, was Dean of Durham from 1745 till his death in 1774. As Dean he held the 'second stall,' next below the Bishop's.

ll. 131–48. This is the poet's rendering of the painter's idea, as set forth by Hogarth in his picture entitled 'Morning.'

l. 174. Niobe, daughter of Tantalos, and wife of Amphion, king of Thebes, had a large family (variously stated as six, seven, and ten of each sex) and vaunted her superiority to Latona as the mother of only two children, Apollo and Artemis. By command of their offended mother, these deities slew in one day all Niobe's children: whereupon she wept herself to death, and was turned into a stone, out of which waters flowed eternally. Byron calls Rome

'the Niobe of nations . . .
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe.'
(Childe Harold, iv. 79.)

l. 176. Cp. Young's Night Thoughts, iv. 675:

''Tis impious in a good man to be sad.'

l. 202. *Geta*;—the name of the 'arch sly rogue' of a serving-man, in the Adelphi and Phormio, two comedies of Terence.

l. 253. Cp. The Task, iv. 88-92, 308–10; and Lucret. De Rer. Nat. lib. ii. 1–6.

'Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem,
Non quia vexari quemquam'st jucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipse modis careas quia cernere suave est.
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri,
Per campos instructa sua sine parte pericli.'

This passage was a favourite one with Bacon, who quotes it in Ess. I, and in Adv. of Learn, bk. i. So Samuel Daniel:

'Thrice happy you that look as from the shore,
And have no venture in the wreck you see,
No interest, no occasion to deplore
Other men's travails, while yourselves sit free.'

And so Young, Sat. v. (quoted in S. v. 135).

'There from the ways of men laid safe ashore,
We smile to hear the distant tempest roar.'

l. 269. Cp. Rev. vi. 16.

l. 311. Voltaire died May 30, 1778.

l. 358. Dr. Richard Conyers, of Helmsley in Yorkshire, and afterwards (in 1775) Rector of St. Paul's, Deptford, was a brother-in-law of Mr. John Thornton, and was the medium of introduction between Cowper and Mr. Newton (who preached the Doctor's funeral sermon, May 7, 1786).

l. 378. *A coronet.* William Legge, second Earl of Dartmouth, was born in 1731, the same year as Cowper: they 'sat side by side in the sixth form at Westminster'; and they died within a year of each other,—the poet in 1800, and the peer in 1801. He was the patron of Olney, and the friend of Cowper and Mr. Newton.

l. 379. Cp. Isaiah xxiv. 13.

l. 388. *Solyma*;—Jerusalem.

l. 406. 'My mind to me a kingdom is.' See Percy's Reliques, First Ser. bk. iii. song 5. Two Gent. of Verona, v. 4:

'These are my mates, that make their wills their law.'

Timon of Athens, v. 5:

'you . . . . . filled the time
With all licentious measure, making your wills
The scope of justice.'

Aeschyl. Prom. Vinct. 186:

ὅτι τραχὺς καὶ παρ' ἑαυτῷ
Τὸ δίκαιον ἔχων Ζεύς.

Eurip. Supplic. 431:

κρατεῖ δ' εἷς τὸν νόμον κεκτημένος
Αὐτὸς παρ' αὑτῷ.

Sext. Empiric. Adv. Mathem. ii. 31 (cited by Porson): μηδενὸς γὰρ ἐπιστατοῦντος νόμου ἕκαστος ἐν χειρὶ τὸ δίκαιον εἶχε. Cp. too Henry VIII, i. 2:

'We must not rend our subjects from our laws
And stick them in our will.'

ll. 453–8. Cp. Hope, 712–41. In these passages the Poet is speaking from his own experience, while under Dr. Cotton's roof at St. Alban's. See Life, vol. ii. p. xviii.

ll. 467–8. Cp. Hamlet, v. 2:

'Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep.'

Richard III, i. 4:

'The conscience . . . mutinies in a man's bosom.'

King John, iv. 2:

'Hostility and civil tumult reigns
Between my conscience and my cousin's death.'

Troil. and Cress. v. 2:

'Within my soul there doth commence a fight.'

Richard II, ii. 1:

'Then all too late comes counsel to be heard,
Where will doth mutiny with wit's regard.'

Julius Cæsar, ii. 1:

'the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.'

στασιάζει γὰρ ἡ ψυχή. [τῶν μοχθηρῶν.] Arist. Eth. Nicom. ix. 4. § 9.

l. 472. Cp. Psalm i. 1.

l. 514. Cp. Eph. ii. 1; Rom. vi. 23.

l. 524. Cp. Expostulation, l. 129.

EXPOSTULATION.

Written in March 1781. Of this poem the author says, 'I have written with tolerable ease to myself, and in my own opinion (for an opinion I am obliged to have about what I write, whether I will or no) with more emphasis and energy than in either of the others.'—*To Newton*, Mar. 18, 1781.

l. 33. Jeremiah ix. 1.

l. 39. Cp. Jeremiah v. 8.

l. 42. Cp. Gloster in 3 Henry VI, iii. 2;

'Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile.'

Macbeth, ii. 3:

'There's danger in men's smiles; the near in blood
The nearer bloody.'

Julius Cæsar, iv. 1:

'And some, that smile, have in their hearts I fear,
Millions of mischief.'

l. 59. *two-leaved brass.* Cp. Isaiah xlvi. 2. Herodotus tells us, in his description of Babylon, that there were a hundred brazen gates in the city

walls: *πύλαι δὲ ἐνεστᾶσι πέριξ τοῦ τείχεος ἑκατὸν χάλκεαι πᾶσαι· καὶ σταθμοί τε καὶ ὑπέρθυρα ὡσαύτως.*'—Herod. i. 179.

l. 60. *deluge*;—cp. Isaiah xxviii. 2; lix. 19.

l. 64. Cp. Ezekiel vi. 11.

l. 147. Cp. St. Matt. xxiii. 14.

l. 149. Cp. St. Mark vii. 3, 4.

l. 157. Cp. St. Matt. xvi. 2, 3.

l. 177. Exodus xiii. 21.

l. 181. Numbers xx. 8–11.

l. 182. Exodus xvi. 13–15.

l. 183. Cp. Deut. viii. 4.

l. 185. Exodus xiv. 21, 22; Joshua iii. 13–16.

l. 190. 'Vide Joshua v. 14'—C.

l. 201. Cp. Romans ix. 4, 5.

l. 214. Cp. 2 Henry IV, iv. 4:

> 'Most subject is the fattest soil to weeds;
> And he, the noble image of my youth,
> Is overspread with them.'

l. 231. Cp. Virg. Georg. iii. 34:

> 'Stubunt et Parii lapides, spirantia signa.'

l. 246. *Peel'd, scatter'd*;—from Isaiah xviii. 2, 7. To 'peel' seems to be another form of the verb to 'pill,' or pillage; cp. '*peeling* their provinces,' Par. Reg. iv. 136. Mr. Aldis Wright says of this word, 'In the passages of Isaiah . . . . it was probably suggested by the 'depilatus' of the Vulgate, with which, according to some who derive it from *pilum*, 'hair,' it is etymologically connected.'—Bible Wordbook, 1866, p. 365. 'Peeled' would thus mean 'stripped of hair': cp. Ezek. xxix. 8. Others derive the word from *pellis*, 'skin'; in which case it would mean 'stripped of skin.'

l. 282. *Children*;—the American Colonies, whose impatience of British control Cowper always regarded as rebellion. 'Nations may be guilty of a conduct that would render an individual infamous for ever, and yet carry their heads high, talk of their glory, and despise their neighbours. . . . The Americans, who, if they had contented themselves with a struggle for lawful liberty, would have deserved applause, seem to me to have incurred the guilt of parricide, by renouncing their parent, by making her ruin their favourite object, and by associating themselves with her worst enemy.'—*To Newton*, Jan. 26, 1783.

l. 292. See Introd. § 3.

l. 296. *phlégmatic* in this line, and the adj. *cónsummate* in l. 315, throw the accent in the first syllable. See note on The Task, v. 147 (vol. ii. p. 241).

l. 306. The War of American Independence raised the National Debt from 129 to 268 millions; and the annual charge in respect of the same to £9,512,232.'—National Cyclop. 1849, vol. viii. 872.

l. 338. Cp. Psalm cxxxix. 12.

l. 343. Cp. Isaiah xl. 12.

l. 353. 1 Samuel xvii. 47.

l. 360. Cp. Proverbs xxviii. 1.

l. 361. Cp. 1 Samuel xiv. 6.

l. 374. *Truck;—v. tr.* (Fr. *troquer*, Ital. *truccare*, Span. *trocar*), to give in exchange, by way of traffick or barter. So Churchill, The Times, l. 137:

'The venal hero *trucks* his fame for gold.'

Cp. his Duellist, iii. 192. It is also used as a *v. n.* by Burke in his speech on Conciliation with America: 'Despotism itself is obliged to *truck* and huckster.' Cowper also has the *sb.* 'truck,' meaning exchange or barter, in The Task, ii. 471. The word is very far from being obsolete; as we have heard much in recent days of 'the Truck System,' 'payment by truck,' &c.

l. 376. The Test Act was passed in 1673, with the design of excluding Papists from power. By it, all persons on entering any office of trust, whether civil or military, and all officers of the Royal Household, were required to 'receive the Sacrament' according to the forms of the Church of England, and to take their oath thereon against the belief in Transubstantiation. This was followed in 1678 by the Parliamentary Test, which by similar requirements disabled Papists from sitting in either House. The Corporation Act of 1661 had already demanded the same test of all Mayors, and other corporate officers. These Acts were not repealed until 1828; when for the Sacramental Test was substituted a Declaration, by which persons entering on any office pledged themselves not to use the influence thus acquired as a means of subverting the Established Church.

l. 384. *A Bishop;*—Dr. William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester from 1760 till his death in 1779. The allusion is to his work entitled 'The Alliance between Church and State: or, the Necessity and Equity of an Established Religion, and a Test Law, demonstrated,' 1741.

ll. 390–413. This passage was substituted by the poet for one which he had written here originally, containing very severe language against the Roman Church. He wrote to Mr. Newton, Nov. 27, 1781, 'I lately became uneasy about the subject and had no rest in my mind for three days, till I resolved to submit it to a trial at your tribunal . . . . I am glad you have condemned it . . . . and I rejoice that it will not be in the power of the critics, whatever else they may charge me with, to accuse me of bigotry, or a design to make a certain denomination of Christians odious, at the hazard of the public peace. I had rather my book were burnt, than a single line guilty of such a tendency should escape me.'

l. 414. The sin of Sodom.

l. 420. Cp. Genesis xiii. 10.

l. 423. St. Jude 7.

l. 444. Cp. Numbers xii. 3.

l. 445. Cp. Acts xxvi. 28, 29.

l. 449. Cp. 1 Samuel ii. 12.

l. 465. Cp. Psalm ii. 3.

l. 480. The Latin element in our language is not the legacy of the Roman possessors of our island, but came in mainly through the Romance language of the Normans. Up to the time of the revival of classical learning, which took place (in this country) in the reigns of Henry VIII, and his immediate successors, the Latin words in our language had reached us mediately through the French; and these have for the most part retained the French garb in which they were at first introduced to us. Acquaintance with the classical literature, and the original languages in which it was written, had an immediate and strongly marked effect on our tongue. We then began to 'receive largely from the Latin, and this by way of direct importation from it, and not as before, Latin words, which had been French before they were English, and only as French reached us.' (Trench, English Past and Present, ed. 1855, p. 36). This adoption and free use of words of Latin origin continued throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: and after having received some check about the period of the Restoration, was revived by Dr. Samuel Johnson, in that extravagant form which has conduced to the modern reaction in favour of the simpler language of our Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French forefathers.

l. 499. For 'tolling'—an epithet whose exquisite beauty and propriety, in this line, could not have been surpassed—and which held its place till the edition of 1788, Cowper then substituted the comparatively tame expression 'rolling.' Well sings the Laureate, 'It is not true that second thoughts are best' (Sea Dreams, l. 65)*; and well wrote Southey, 'In all ordinary cases the word which first presents itself is best' (The Doctor, vol. i. 104, ed. 1834).

l. 504. *Gods of thine.* Cowper seems to have thought that Woden and Thor were British deities. They were, of course, Teutonic.

l. 506. Cp. 1 Samuel v. 4.

l. 517. 'Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.'—C.

l. 520. The Crusades.

l. 523. *Rome* here rhymes to *tomb*. The word was commonly pronounced as *Room* by all educated persons, both before and after Cowper's day. Indeed it may still be heard occasionally so pronounced; for example, always by Earl Russell, when speaking in the House. That this was customary in Shakspeare's time we learn from Julius Caesar, i. 2:

* This was the reading when 'Sea Dreams' first appeared in Macmillan's Mag. for January, 1860 (vol. i. p. 192). When this poem was included in the same volume with 'Enoch Arden,' 1864, p. 99, the words were altered to

'Is it so true that second thoughts are best?
Not first, and third, which are a riper first?'

'Now is it *Rome* indeed, and *room* enough,
When there is in it but one only man'—

and perhaps the same play on the word is intended in Act iii. 1:

'No Rome of safety, for Octavia's yet.'

King John, iii. 1:

'O, lawful let it be,
That I have *room* with *Rome* to curse awhile!'

Pope, who was particular about his pronunciation, makes 'Rome' rhyme to *doom* (Essay on Criticism, l. 687; Rape of the Lock, l. 140); to *dome*, which was then invariably, as it is now frequently, pronounced *doom* (Essay on Criticism, l. 248); and to *Broome* (Dunciad, i. 145). Yet Cowper's practice was not uniform, since in Charity, l. 302, he makes 'Rome' rhyme to *home;* and in Table Talk, l. 433, and Expostulation, l. 209, to *come*. This last may be taken to indicate a transition stage in the pronunciation. Nor is even Shakspeare always self-consistent. Thus in 1 Henry VI, iii. 1, in reply to the Bishop of Winchester's threat, 'This Rome shall remedy,' Warwick punningly says, '*Roam* thither then.' So late as the time of Byron we find the word rhyming, in the one Chorus, in 'The Deformed Transformed,' pt. ii, sc. 1, to *dome*, *home* and *tomb* successively. It would seem that the change from *Room* to *Rome* was made in Paris in the first half of the seventeenth century. Balzac writes to Chapelain, in 1640: 'Dites-moi si vous approuvez la prononciation parissienne . . . qui rend *Rome* et *Lionne* comme ils sont écrits, au lieu que toute la France prononce *Roume* et *Lioune*' (Notes and Queries, 3rd Ser. x. 370).

l. 551. Cp. 'Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,' King John, v. 2. 'To clip' is to embrace.

l. 569. The Spanish Armada, 1588.

l. 574. The allusion is to the audacious and successful march from Edinburgh to Derby, effected by 'The Chevalier,' Prince Charles Edward, in 1745, in defiance of the two armies lying in his way, one under Marshal Wade, and the other under the Duke of Cumberland.

l. 596. 'Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons, at Runnymede near Windsor.'—C.

l. 599. Daphne, pursued by Phoebus, prayed to Heaven for protection, and was thereupon changed into a laurel, the leaf of which became ever after the cognisance of the poet-god. (Ovid, Met. i. 452). The Barons gained not only the laurel of victory, but the Nymph Liberty herself.

l. 664. In Conversation, l. 72, is another allusion to the habit of profane swearing used by Counsel at the Bar. Erskine is said to have set the example, in his defence of Lord George Gordon, Feb. 5, 1781, a month or so before this poem was written.

l. 694. Alluding to the 'Armed Neutrality' of 1780. See Introd. § 3.

HOPE.

Written in May or June, 1781.

l. 28. The original 'gay Lothario,' whose name has become proverbial for a man of pleasure, was a character in Rowe's tragedy of 'The Fair Penitent,' where he figures as a libertine and seducer.

l. 69–73. Cp. Keble's Christian Year, Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity:

'Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow
Hues of their own, fresh borrow'd from the heart.'

l. 116. Cp. St. James i. 17.

l. 190 *Whip-gig*. I have not met with this compound elsewhere. It means the same as 'whirligig.' Cp. Love's Lab. Lost, iv. 3: 'To see great Hercules whipping a gig.' Mr. Wedgwood connects 'gig' with Fr. *gigue*, a dance or 'jig,' and Germ. *geige*, a fiddle.

l. 205. Nathaniel Cotton, M.D. (born 1707, died 1788), was the physician under whose care Cowper was placed at St. Alban's, 1763–5: see Life, vol. ii. p. xvii. In his own day Dr. Cotton had considerable popularity as a writer of verse. Of his 'Visions in Verse, for the Entertainment and Instruction of younger Minds,' 1751, Southey tells us that it 'used to be one of those books which were always in print, because there was a certain demand for them as presents for young people.' (S. i. 103.) Of his miscellaneous pieces, 'The Fireside' is still well known. He was a friend and correspondent of Dr. Doddridge. 'I shall always respect him,' wrote Cowper to Hill, Sept. 11, 1784; 'he is truly a philosopher according to my judgment of his character, every tittle of the knowledge in natural subjects being connected in his mind with the firm belief of an Omniscient Agent.'

l. 230. Cp. 1 Tim. v. 6.

l. 287. Cp. 1 Kings iv. 33.

l. 293. *Chloe*. This proverbial name for a rustic lass was originally an epithet of Demeter (Ceres) at Athens, where her yearly festival was called Chloia. From Gr. χλόη, the first green shoot of plants in spring.

l. 329. Proverbs vii. 2.

l. 414. By an Act, 21 Henry VIII, sect. 14–16, an Archbishop or Duke may 'retain' six chaplains; a Marquess or Earl, five; a Bishop or Viscount, four; and a Baron, three.

l. 453. Cp. Psalm lxviii. 11. Prayer-book Version.

l. 458. *Cornubia* was the Roman name of Cornwall.

l. 460. *Her sons*. 'The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland. Vide Krantz.' —C. The 'History of Greenland, containing a Relation of the Mission carried on for about these thirty years, by the Unitas Fratrum: By David Crantz,' was translated from the High Dutch in 1767. In 1780 another work by Crantz, 'The Ancient and Modern History of the Brethren,' was translated by Benj. La Trobe. The Moravian Brethren claim to derive

heir origin from the Eastern Church in the ninth century, through the 'Bohemian Brethren,' who were a branch of the Hussites. As a distinct sect, they were founded by Christian David, and organized in 1722 by Count Zinzendorf (born 1700, died 1760), who, having obtained Orders in the Lutheran Church, was appointed as their Bishop in 1734. They accept the Augsburg Confession, but stand to the Lutheran Church in much the same relation as the followers of Zinzendorf's friend, John Wesley, do to ours.

l. 471. *Eglantine* (Fr. *aiglantier*);—the sweet-briar (Rosa Robiginosa). A common misapprehension, that the 'eglantine' of the poets is the honeysuckle, seems to have arisen from Milton's L'Allegro, l. 47.

l. 488. Cp. Milton's 'graceful vicissitude, like day and night,' Par. Lost, vi. 8.

l. 501. Cp. King Henry's speech to the Prince, 1 Henry IV, iii. 2.

l. 524. Isaiah lv. 12, 13.

l. 554. *Leuconomus.* George Whitefield (born 1714, died 1770) was of Pembroke College, Oxford, and was ordained 1736. He was chaplain to Selina Countess of Huntingdon. For some time he acted in concert with the two Wesleys: but owing to differences respecting the doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance, he separated from them and became the leader of the 'Calvinistic Methodists,' as opposed to the Wesleyans, or Arminian Methodists.

l. 627. Ezekiel xiii. 10.

l. 630. St. Matthew xxvii. 46.

l. 668. Cp. Charity, ll. 9, 10.

l. 677. Cp. Shakspeare's 'drops that sacred pity hath engender'd,' As You Like It, ii. 7.

l. 700. Cp. Young's Night Thoughts, i. 55–65.

l. 742. From Adam's morning hymn in Par. Lost, v. 153: cp. Retirement, l. 87.

l. 747. Cp. Rev. vi. 14.

l. 749. Cp. 2 Peter iii. 10.

l. 762. These closing lines were probably intended as a portrait of the Rev. J. Newton.

CHARITY.

Written in a fortnight, and sent to Mr. Newton, July 12, 1781.

l. 23. Captain James Cook was killed at Owhyhee in a quarrel amongst the Sandwich Islanders, Feb. 14, 1779, in his 51st year: cp. Task, i. 620–30.

ll. 40–56. Cowper's history is here at fault. He has confounded King Philip II (who was never 'imperial') with his father, the Emperor Charles V; the misdeeds of Cortez (who conquered Mexico in 1519–20), with

those of Pizarro (who conquered Peru in 1530–3); and the death of Montezuma, king of the Aztecs (who was slain by his own subjects, because he urged them to submission), with that of the Inca Atahualpa (who was tried for heresy by Father Vincent and condemned to be burnt; but who, on accepting baptism, had his sentence commuted to strangulation).

l. 66. Isaiah xiv. 10, 11.

l. 67. *Iberia;*—i.e. Spain; so named from its principal river, the Iberus (now called the Ebro).

l. 135. Cp. St. Luke i. 19, 26.

l. 137-95. See note on The Task, ii. 42.

l. 162. Cp. Prov. iii. 17.

l. 217. Cp. Prov. xiv. 31.

l. 230. Isaiah lxi. 3.

l. 239. Cp. Pope's Universal Prayer, verse 4:

'What Conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This teach me more than hell to shun,
That more than heaven pursue.'

l. 253. John Thornton (born 1720, died 1790) was a wealthy and philanthropic Russia-merchant in London. He was brother-in-law to Dr. Conyers (cp. Truth, l. 358), and his sister was married to an uncle of Wilberforce. He was the friend and patron of Mr. Newton; supplied both him and Cowper with funds for the relief of the poor at Olney; took 1000 copies of the Olney Hymns; and sent the volume of 1782 (in which this poem was included) to Benjamin Franklin. At his death Cowper wrote some verses to his memory.

l. 296. John Howard, 'the Philanthropist' (born 1726, died 1790), being on a voyage to the scene of the earthquake at Lisbon, in 1756, was taken as a prisoner of war. The interest thus excited in the condition of prisoners was increased by his official appointment as Sheriff of Bedfordshire, in 1773. He personally inspected all the gaols in Great Britain, and afterwards the principal prisons throughout Europe; received the thanks of the House of Commons for his valuable evidence on the subject, in 1774; and in 1777 published his work on 'The State of the Prisons in England and Wales.' Extending his researches next to hospitals, both at home and abroad, he himself fell a victim to the plague, at Cherson in the Crimea. His statue, by Bacon, was set up in St. Paul's Cathedral.

l. 410. So Dido, in Virg. Aen. i. 630:

'Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.'

King Lear, iv. 6:

'A most poor man, made tame by fortune's blows;
Who by the art of known and feeling sorrows
Am pregnant to good pity.'

Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster, Act ii:

'You that are grieved can pity.'

l. 432. 1 Cor. xiii. 4–8.

l. 438. From Par. Lost, v. 285–7:

'Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heav'nly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide.'

ll. 445–6. Cp. Par. Lost iv. 156–9:

'Now gentle gales
Fanning their odoriferous wings dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils.'

l. 456. Cp. Pope's Rape of the Lock, iii. 16:

'At every word a reputation dies.'

And Churchill, The Apology, l. 47:

'Quick-circulating slanders mirth afford;
And reputation bleeds in every word.'

l. 460. *Mantle-tree*:—originally, when open fireplaces were in use, the beam of wood over the opening, and *from* which things depended. So R. Herrick, in his poem entitled 'To Larr':

'No more shall I from mantle-trees hang down
To honour thee, my little parsley crown.'

In Cowper's time it meant what we now call the 'mantle-shelf,' *on* which things are set. So Swift: 'If you break any china on the mantle-tree or cabinet, gather up the fragments.'

l. 469. A *Brief* was a 'licence and protection,' issued by the Sovereign under the Great Seal, to all the clergy, 'to impower them to ask, collect, and receive the alms' of the people, for some specified object; as, on occasion of some great loss or calamity, general or local. A specimen of such a brief for the rebuilding of the church after a fire at Holt Market, Norfolk, in 1708, may be seen quoted *in extenso* in the Eastern Counties' Collectanea, vol. i. p. 22. See a list of such briefs, dating from 1675, in the parish of Ormesby S. Margaret, Norfolk, in Notes and Queries, 2nd Ser., ii. 22. The Preamble contained a 'brief' statement of the circumstances which led to the appeal: hence the name of the document. They were abolished by 9 Geo. IV, July 15, 1828.

l. 491. Cp. The Task, ii. 315–25.

l. 499. Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's from 1713 till his death in 1745. 'Swift's darling motto was, *Vive la bagatelle!* a good wish for a philosopher of his complexion, the greater part of whose wisdom, whencesoever it came, most certainly came not from above.'—*To Unwin*, Nov. 18, 1782. The use of the preposition 'in' after the verb 'to instance' is now obsolete. It seems to imply that the verb was formerly regarded as intransitive. Thus

the phrase 'I might *instance in* the Dean' would be equivalent to the form 'I might bring forward an instance, in (the case of) the Dean.'

ll. 521–6. The law of libel was very severe until the passing of Lord Campbell's Act, 6 and 7 Vict., intituled 'An Act to amend the law respecting Defamatory Words and Libel.' As an illustration of the practice referred to by our poet, take an example, almost at random, from 'The Foundling Hospital for Wit,' 1763, p. 18:

'Sir *J*——*n's* clear Head and sense profound,
Blaz'd out in P——t;
G——*n*, for Eloquence renown'd,
To grace the C——t you sent.
To these congenial Souls you join'd
Some more, as choice and proper,
Bright *B*——*tle!* Darling of Mankind!
Good *L*——*k*— and sage *H*——*r*.'

l. 588. Cp. St. John. xv. 15.

l. 609. *dipped and washed.* It would seem that the Baptist controversy has always been conducted with peculiar virulence.

l. 613. Niccolo del' Machiavelli (born 1469, died 1527) was a diplomatist and statesman of Florence. When the Medici seized that city, in 1512, he suffered imprisonment in the cause of liberty. He was also a poet, dramatist, and historian. His great work, 'Del Principe' (written in 1515, but not published till 1532), is an exposition of the principles of statecraft current in those days. Viewed in the light of modern opinion, it exhibited so much political immorality, that the name of 'a Machiavel' became a proverbial one for a scheming and unprincipled knave; and that of 'Machiavellism' for a policy of unscrupulous self-aggrandisement.

CONVERSATION.

Written in July and August, 1781. The original design was, that this poem should 'perform the same office in a second' volume, as Table Talk in the first: viz. 'by way of introductory fiddle to the band that follows.'—*To Newton*, July 22, 1781. 'It is not a dialogue, as the title would lead you to surmise; nor does it bear the least resemblance to Table Talk, except that it is serio-comic, like all the rest. My design in it is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues; . . to point out the abuses, which is the jocular part of the business, and to prescribe the remedy, which is the grave and sober.'—*To Mrs. Newton*, Aug. 1781. So early as 1756, Cowper had made 'Conversation' the subject of a prose essay in the second volume of 'The Connoisseur' (No. 138)—a weekly periodical conducted by his friends George Colman and Bonnell Thornton.

l. 19. Cp. Geo. Herbert, Church Porch, st. 76:

'Sum up at night what thou hast done by day.'

l. 25. Cp. St. Matthew xii. 36.

l. 55. Hebrews vi. 16.

l. 58. G. A. B. Vestris (born in Florence, 1729; died 1808) made his *début* in Paris in 1748, and succeeded to Dupré's title of 'Dieu de la Danse.' He retired in favour of his son, in 1781; on which occasion Cowper wrote some verses entitled 'A Card.' He appeared once more on the boards in Paris, in 1800, on the occasion of his grandson's *début*. (Bourrienne, Mémoires: iii. p. 70). In his 'Account of the Treatment of his Hares,' he says, 'After supper they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols; in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party.' (S. iv. 424). Cp. Tirocinium l. 542.

ll. 163-202. These strictures on what was then the fashionable vice of duelling, were perhaps suggested by the scandal occasioned by two political duels in the previous year (1780). One was between Fox and Mr. W. Adam, and the other between the Earl of Shelburne and Col. Fullarton. Both arose from offence taken in the freedom of Parliamentary debate; and Sir J. Lowther took up the subject in the House of Commons. 'If,' he said, 'there are to be these constant appeals to arms, the Parliament of England will become no better than a Polish Diet.'—Stanhope, History of England, ed. 1858, vii. 10.

l. 198. Dares and Entellus are the two pugilists, whose combat is described by Virgil, Aen. v. 362-472.

l. 243. The marvellous adventures of Guy, Earl of Warwick, have little or nothing of an historical character. Yet the romances of which he is the hero date from the earlier half of the fourteenth century. He is supposed to have lived in the days of the Saxon king Athelstan.

l. 251. Cowper disliked tobacco, but he was free from the superstition which attaches a moral stigma to those who like it. His two great friends, Mr. Newton and Mr. Bull, were habitual smokers. In allusion to the present passage the poet wrote to the former, Sept. 18, 1781, 'I have often promised myself a laugh with you about your pipe. . . . You will observe however, for your comfort and the honour of that same pipe, that it hardly falls within the line of my censure. You never fumigate the ladies, or force them out of company. Your friends indeed have reason to complain that it frequently deprives them of the pleasure of your own conversation, while it leads you either into your study or your garden; but in all other respects it is as innocent a pipe as can be. Smoke away therefore.' And in his poetical Epistle to Mr. Bull, dated June 22, 1782, he thus adverts to the line before us:—

'Forgive the bard, if bard he be,
Who once too wantonly made free

To touch with a satyric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe.'

l. 268. *milder herb;*—namely, Cowper's favourite beverage, tea; the 'fragrant lymph' of The Task, iii. 391; 'the cups that cheer but not inebriate' of Book iv. 40.

l. 271. *phiz;*—an abbreviation of 'physiognomy' (of which 'visnomy' was an older form of contraction). This is now regarded as a 'slang' word, but is allowed by Dr. Johnson, and used by Churchill (The Ghost, Bk. iv. 635), and by Goldsmith (The Double Transformation, l. 67).

l. 284. *puss-gentleman;*—because the perfume which he affects is obtained from the civet-*cat*. So in the Fatal Dowry, by Massinger (act iii. 1), Romont exclaims, on the exit of Novall the young exquisite,

'What a perfume the musk-cat leaves behind him!'

l. 299. *Budge*, as a *sb.*, is fur; and 'Minshew says, particularly, *lamb's fur*:—which is confirmed by a passage in the Cambridge Statutes, directing facings to be made "furruris *buggeis* sive agninis," the Latin word being evidently intended to explain the barbarous one.' (Nares' Glossary, s.v.) Milton writes ('On the Articles of Peace with the Irish'), 'They are become so liberal as to part freely with their own *budge* gowns from off their backs, and bestow them upon the magistrate.' Hence 'budge,' as an *adj.*, came to mean 'solemn,' affecting the airs of academic dignity in its fur-faced academic gown—in a word, 'donnish.' So here; and so in Comus, l. 707, 'budge doctors of the Stoic fur,' where see further Mr. R. C. Browne's note (Milton, Clar. Press Ser. i. 295). Mr. Oakley writes in Notes and Queries, 4th Ser. xi. 164, that in this sense 'the word is still in common use among peasants and schoolboys of the midland counties (who, however, pronounce it *bug*, on the principle of *brig* for *bridge*).'

l. 352. Cp. Rochefoucauld, 'Il n'est jamais plus difficile de bien parler, que quand on a honte de se taire.'

l. 358. There is an old belief in 'perpetual lamps,' which have continued burning in the tombs of the dead for a thousand years, or may go on burning for ever. In the time of Pope Paul III one was said to have been found alight in the tomb of Cicero's daughter Tullia, which had been shut up for 1500 years. Out of many allusions in our poets to this notion, cp. Butler, Hudibras, Part ii. Canto i. ll. 309–12:

'Love in your heart as idly burns
As fire in antique Roman urns,
To warm the dead, and vainly light
Those only that see nothing by't.'

Pope, Eloisa to Abelard, l. 261:

'Ah hopeless lasting flames! like those that burn
To light the dead, and warm the unfruitful urn.'

And in his Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady:

"Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres.'

Blair, the Grave, l. 443:

'Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine
Enlightens but yourselves.'

See I. Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature, p. 88, ed. 1851; and cp. The Spectator, No. 379.

l. 454. Cp. Gray's 'rude forefathers of the hamlet,' Elegy, l. 16.

l. 466. Cp. Young, Sat. vii. (quoted in S. v. 208):

'And into coxcombs burnishes our fools.'

l. 477. *A close designer;*—one who entertains secret designs.

l. 486. The editor has not ventured to rectify the spelling in the phrase 'veil your daring crest,' which is the reading of all the editions. The real word is, to 'vail,' that is, to lower or let down, especially in token of submission. It is derived from the Fr. *avaler*; which verb was itself from the adverb *aval*, signifying 'down-stream,' and used of a river flowing valewards (Lat. *ad vallem*). On the same principle, and with the opposite meaning, 'to mount' is formed from the Fr. *monter*, which has its derivative adverb *amont;* that is, *ad montem.*

l. 505. Cp. St. Luke xxiv. 13–33.

l. 590. *fee simple;*—absolute legal possession, defined by Cowell as 'that wherof we are seised in those general words, "To us and our heirs for ever."'

l. 637. Cp. Virgil, Aen. v. 344:

'Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore Virtus.'

l. 823. About the year 1760, the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey of Medmenham in Bucks, became the rendezvous for a club of twelve persons, who styled themselves 'Monks of St. Francis,' their 'Prior' being Sir Francis Dashwood (who became Lord Le Despencer in 1763). To this club belonged Cowper's old schoolfellows, Lloyd and Churchill; as well as Paul Whitehead, and Wilkes. The 'Essay on Woman,' for which Wilkes was prosecuted, was written for these 'Medmenham Monks,' who are said to have paid adoration to a picture of Venus. Churchill himself writes (The Candidate, l. 700):

'Dashwood shall pour from a communion cup,
Libations to the goddess without eyes.'

'To crown the horror, they took the guise and names of the Apostles, and nude Marthas and Marys held the bowl to the lips of Simon Peter and of Jude.'—Doran's Habits and Men, 1855, p. 320.

l. 850. 1 Kings xviii. 21.

RETIREMENT.

Begun in August, and finished in October, 1781. 'In the course of my journey through this ample theme, I should wish to touch upon the characters, the deficiencies, and the mistakes of thousands, who enter on a scene of retirement unqualified for it in every respect, and with such designs as have no tendency to promote either their own happiness, or that of others.'—*To Unwin*, August 25, 1781. By this time Cowper's mind was becoming weary. 'Retirement grows, but more slowly than any of its predecessors. Time was when I could with ease produce fifty, sixty, or seventy lines in a morning; now, I generally fall short of thirty, and am sometimes forced to be content with a dozen.'—*To Newton*, Sept. 18, 1781.

l. 86. Paradise Lost, v. 153.

l. 114. Cp. Pope's 'Looks through Nature up to Nature's God,' Essay on Man, Ep. iv. 332; and The Task, iii. 243–7, v. 805–14, vi. 221–4.

l. 199. *Elysian scenes*;—see note on Prog. of Error, l. 180.

l. 229. *the woodbine weds the elm.* Cp. Ovid, Metam. xiv. 665:

> 'Haec quoque quae juncta vitis requiescit in ulmo
> Si non nupta foret, terrae acclinata jaceret.'

Horat. Epod. ii. 9, 10:

> 'Ergo aut adulta vitium propagine
> Altas *maritat* populos.'

Milton, Paradise Lost, v. 216–20:

> 'or they led the vine
> To wed the elm; she spous'd about him twines
> Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
> Her dow'r th' adopted clusters, to adorn
> His barren leaves.'

Comedy of Errors, ii. 2:

> 'Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine
> Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,
> Makes me with thy strength to communicate.'

Churchill, Gotham, i. 253:

> 'The woodbine, who her elm in marriage meets,
> And brings her dowry in surrounding sweets.'

l. 247. *Thyrsis* is the shepherd swain in Virgil's seventh Eclogue; *Alexis*, another in the second Eclogue.

l. 279. William Heberden, M.D. (born 1710, died 1801), was Fellow of St. John's College, and Lecturer in Materia Medica, at Cambridge, 1730; F.R.S., 1750; Associate of the Royal Society of Medicine in Paris, 1778; and at the time of Cowper's writing was about to retire from practice, at the age of 71. Churchill speaks of him as 'Physic's soft son, the gentle

Heberden' (The Candidate, l. 748). Cowper consulted him during his illness in the Temple, 1763; and he was one of the physicians called in to attend Dr. Johnson in his last illness. He is said to have been the first to use the wet blanket.

ll. 283–300. The poet here draws the portrait of what he was himself in 1763, and in 1773.

l. 394. *Atlas of the State*: i. e. the supporter of the state as Atlas was said to be the upholder of the world. Atlas, whose name in Greek means 'The Endurer,' was one of the Titans. Homer says of him, 'he keeps the long pillars which hold heaven and earth asunder':

ἔχει δέ τε κίονας αὐτὸς
Μακρὰς, αἳ γαῖάν τε καὶ οὐρανον ἀμφὶς ἔχουσι.

(Odyss. i. 53.) Later writers feigned that, for the part which he took with the Titans in their war against Heaven, he was condemned by Zeus to support the heavens with his head and hands. Others report that Atlas, being a king of Mauritania in Africa, repelled the visit of Perseus, out of a fear that the latter would deprive him of his golden apples; and that Perseus, by exhibiting to him Medusa's head, turned him into the mountain, or chain of mountains, bearing his name in Central Africa; and on which, as being supposed to be the highest in the world, the ancients believed that the heavens rested. The term 'atlas,' as a name for a collection of maps, was first employed by Nicholas Kauffman (better known us 'Mercator,' born in Holstein in 1640) who had on his title-page a figure of Atlas bearing the globe on his back.

l. 406. Cp. The Task, vi. 50–53. Soph. Ajax, 964:

οἱ γὰρ κακοὶ γνώμαισι τἀγαθὸν χεροῖν
ἔχοντες, οὐκ ἴσασι, πρίν τις ἐκβάλῃ,

where Mr. Pitman cites, in his ed. of the Ajax, 1830, p. 76, Libanius, Epist. 1814, κείμενον ἐν χεροῖν οὐκ εἰδὼς, ὃ γνώσεται ἀπέλθον. So Plautus, Captiv. i. 2:

'Tum denique homines nostra intelligimus bona
Quum quae in potestate habuimus illa amisimus.'

Horat. Carm. lib. iii. xxiv. 31:

'Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quaerimus invidi.

Much Ado about Nothing, iv. 1;

'for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enjoy it; but, being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we reck the value; then we find
The virtue, that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours.'

All's Well that Ends Well, v. 3:

'our rash faults
Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them until we know their grave.'

Measure for Measure, iv. 1:

'For what thou hast not still thou striv'st to get,
And what thou hast, forget'st.'

Young, Night Thoughts, ii. 600:

'How blessings brighten as they take their flight.'

In the fragment Of the Colours of Good and Evill, commonly assigned to Bacon (§ 6) we have these proverbial phrases,—'Cujus privatio mala, bonum: Bona magis carendo quam fruendo sentimus: Bona a tergo formosissima: Good things never appeare in their full beauty, till they turne their backe, and bee going away.'

l. 421. *balk;*—'a ridge of greensward left by design between different occupancies in a common field.' (Halliwell.) Cp. W. Browne, Brit. Pastorals, i. iv. 585:

'And as the ploughman when the land he tills,
Throws up the fruitful earth in rigid hills,
Between whose chevron form he leaves a *balk*,
So 'twixt these hills had nature form'd a walk.'

Bp. Latimer says, in his Second Serm. before King Edward VI, 'The saying is, Many by-walkes, many balkes; many balkes, much stumbling; and where much stumbling is, there is sometime a fall.' It is thus that we get the secondary meaning of the word, as a check or hindrance on the way; in which sense the verb (often erroneously spelt *baulk*) is used by us, and by Cowper in l. 487.

ll. 469, 70. Cp. l. 351.

l. 476. Cp. The Task, ii. 4.

l. 521. *hoy;*—a large boat. Watts says, in his Logic, 'To define a barge and *hoy*, which are between a boat and a ship, is hard.'

l. 525. 'The most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and I cannot but feel astonishment when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion, and even without reflection. In all its various forms it is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. At a time of life when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves would preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had an ear to hear them.'—*To Unwin*, Sept. 26, 1781.

l. 528. Cp. Byron, Stanzas for Music, 'There be none of Beauty's daughters:'—

'And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving
As an infant's asleep.'

l. 537. The *Nereides* were sea-nymphs, the fifty daughters of the sea-god Nereus: the *Dryades* (Gr. δρῦς, an oak) were wood-nymphs, believed to live in, and to die with the trees. Here put for the frequenters of sea-side watering-places, and of country retreats, respectively.

l. 598. *Granby;*—probably the well-known Marquess of Granby: who however was never a 'peer,' as he died in 1770 in the lifetime of his father, Henry, third Duke of Rutland; and his title was only one of courtesy.

l. 623. P. Scipio Africanus was wont to say, 'nunquam se minus otiosum esse quam quum otiosus.'—Cic. De. Off. iii. 1..

l. 687. Voltaire built a chapel to his house at Ferney, with this inscription: 'Deo erexit VOLTAIRE.'

l. 691. *Philologists;*—probably John Horne Tooke, whose Letter to Dunning, already published, contained the germ of the 'Diversions of Purley' (1786), which was regarded with much alarm and suspicion by the orthodox theologians of the day.

l. 713. The Monthly Review, first started in 1749 by Ralph Griffiths. 'The Monthly Reviewers have satisfied me well enough,' wrote Cowper to Unwin (Nov. 18, 1782). Yet their critique on this first volume was not wholly laudatory. Here is the most favourable passage from it: 'He is a poet *sui generis;* for as his notes are peculiar to himself, he classes not with any known species of bards that have preceded him; his style of composition, as well as his modes of thinking, are entirely his own. . . . His predominant turn of mind, though serious and devotional, is at the same time drily humorous and sarcastic. Hence his very religion has a smile that is arch, and his sallies of humour an air that is religious.' (S. i. 239.) Cowper had humorously described to Unwin his anxiety for the verdict of the Monthly,—'I was gratified by the approbation of the London Magazine, and of the Gentleman's. . . . . But the Monthly Review, the most formidable of all my judges, is still behind. What will that critical Radamanthus say when my shivering genius shall appear before him? Still he keeps me in hot water, and I must wait another month for his award. Alas! when I wish for a favourable sentence from that quarter (to confess a weakness that I should not confess to all), I feel myself not a little influenced by a tender regard to my reputation here, even among my neighbours at Olney. Here are watchmakers, who themselves are wits, and who at present perhaps think me one. Here is a carpenter and a baker, and not to mention others, here is your idol Mr. Teedon, whose smile is fame. All these read the Monthly Review, and all these will set me down for a dunce if those terrible critics show them the example. But oh! wherever else I am accounted dull, dear Mr. Griffith let me pass for a genius at Olney!'—June 12, 1782. Cp. Life, vol. ii. p. xxviii.

l. 739. *Frenchman;*—Bruyere.

l. 742 'Though my life has long been that of a recluse, I have not

the temper of one, nor am I in the least an enemy to cheerfulness and good humour; but I . . . . prefer the silence of this little nook, and the snug fireside in our diminutive parlour, to all the splendour and gaiety of Brighton.'—*To Unwin*, Oct. 6, 1781.

l. 767. Cp. 1 Samuel xxii. 1; xxiv. 3.

l. 808. The student, who has now read to the end of the didactic poems of 1782, will not be disposed to adopt the opinion of the Critical Reviewer (April 1782) who wrote, 'Mr. Cowper is not possessed of any superior abilities, or power of genius, requisite to so arduous an undertaking; his verses are in general weak and languid, and have neither novelty, spirit, or animation to recommend them; that mediocrity, so severely condemned by Horace, *Non Dii non homines*, &c., pervades the whole; and while the author avoids everything that is ridiculous or contemptible, he at the same time never rises to anything that we can commend or admire. He says nothing new, sprightly, or entertaining; travelling on a plain, level, flat road, with great composure, almost through the whole long and tedious volume, which is little better than a dull sermon, in very indifferent verse.' (S. i. 236.) But if this may justly be reckoned as one of the 'Curiosities of Criticism,' the reader (when he has perused The Task) will hardly endorse the judgment of the Author himself; who writes, 'I recollect only one instance of a reader who has done justice to my first effusions; for I am sure that, in point of expression, they do not fall a jot below my second; and that, in point of subject, they are, for the most part, superior.'—*To Lady Hesketh*, May 18, 1791. We may however join our voices in unison with the 'plaudit' of Benjamin Franklin, who wrote: 'There is something here so new in the manner, so easy and yet so correct in the language, so clear in the expression, yet concise, and so just in the sentiment, that I have read the whole with great pleasure, and some of the pieces more than once.' (S. i. 237.)

FRIENDSHIP.

Written in Nov. and Dec. 1781. First printed by the Rev. W. Bull, as an addition to Cowper's Translations from M. de la Mothe Guion; Newport Pagnell, 1801, p. 104. The Poet's original intention was to include this piece in the volume of 1782. 'Friendship . . . which is rather of a lively cast, though quite sober, will follow next after Retirement.'—*To Newton*, Dec. 17, 1781. The poem seems to have been disapproved of by the publisher, and laid aside in consequence: 'I will not bumble Johnson for finding fault with Friendship, though I have a better opinion of it myself. But a poet is of all men the most unfit to be judge in his own cause. Partial to all his productions, he is always most partial to the youngest. . . . I may possibly take up that subject a second time, and clothe it in a different

dress.'—*To Newton*, Dec. 31, 1781. This the Poet did. There are at least three distinct versions of the poem: (1) Mr. Bull's copy, which is here given, as being probably the original version of 1781; (2) Mr. Hayley's copy (1803, vol. i. 211), which was reprinted by Dr. John Johnson in 1815, and which differs in so many important respects from the preceding one, as to be almost a new poem; (3) a MS. in Cowper's handwriting, amongst the Unwin Papers in the Brit. Mus. (Add. MSS. 24, 155, fol. 143), which agrees in the main with Mr. Bull's.

l. 30. *Utopian pleasures*;—i. e. imaginary, not based on fact;—the 'false ideal good' of l. 29. Utopia was a tropical island created by the imagination of Sir Thomas More. He fables that it was discovered by one of the companions of Americus Vesputius; and that in its laws and government, its physical, social, and political state, it presents a perfect model of an ideal Commonwealth. The word is commonly thought to mean' *Nowhere* (from Greek *οὐ* and *τόπος*). But there are those who believe that Sir T. More meant the word to be *Eu*topia (Gr. *εὖ*, *well*). This work was at first published in Latin, at Louvain, in 1516; under the title of 'Libellus vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festivus, de optimo Reipublicae statu, deque nova Insula Utopia.' It was eagerly welcomed by the learned world; and was printed at Antwerp, 1516; at Paris, 1516-17; at Basil, 1518; and at Vienna, 1519. The first English translation was by 'Raphe Robynson Citizein and Goldsmythe of London,' and was entitled 'A most Pleasaunt and Wittie Worke of the best State of a Publique Weale, and of the New Yle of Utopia.' London, 1551, 12mo. This was reprinted in facsimile, in Mr. Arber's series of English Reprints.

l. 53. *sinister*. The accent on this word, here placed properly (according to its Latin derivation) on the second syllable, is now thrown back to the first. See note on The Task, v. 147.

l. 98. *tattlers*;—cp. Proverbs xvi. 28.

l. 106. *The Hand-in-Hand* was the first regular Fire Insurance office set up in London, 1696. The 'plates' were nailed on to the walls of all houses insured in this office. Fire insurances on house property were first effected in the year after the great Fire of London, 1667.

ALEXANDER SELKIRK.

Poems, 1782, p. 305.

Selkirk was a Scottish seaman, born in 1676 at Largo in Fifeshire. As a penalty for insubordination to his commander, Capt. Stradling, he was put ashore on the desert Island of Juan Fernandez with his axe and gun, his nautical instruments, a few books, and a small supply of the immediate necessaries of life. This was in Sept. 1704; and he had lived on the island over

four years and four months when, in Feb. 1709, he was picked up by Capt. Woodes Rogers, who made him mate of his vessel. Selkirk returned to England in 1711, and is said to have given to Defoe certain papers, out of which that great novelist constructed his Robinson Crusoe (published in 1719). The story of A. Selkirk had however been laid before the public long before it was thus rendered immortal by Defoe. In 1712 three years after Selkirk's rescue, Capt. Rogers and Edward Cooke published an account of their voyage; with particulars respecting him; and in the following year the tale of his adventures was repeated by Steele, in The Englishman, Dec. 1713. The parish records of Largo afford evidence that Selkirk's disposition was turbulent and unruly. Thus under date Aug. 25, 1695, is an entry that 'Alex^r Selchraige' was 'dilated for his undecent beaiviar in y^e church,' and 'cited to compear befoor the Session' on the 27th: when, however, he 'did not compear being gone away to y^e seas.' Again, on Nov. 25, 1701, he was cited before the Session for a 'tumult in his father's house,' and on the 29th he 'did compeare and confest that he, having taken a drink of salt water out of the cane, his younger brother Andrew laughing at him for it, he did beat him with a stafe, and that he had spoken very ill words concerning his brothers, and particularly he challenged his eldest brother John to a combate, as he called it, of neiffells:' and thereupon the Session adjudged him to stand 'before the pulpit ag^st to-morrow, and to be rebuked in the face of the congregation for his scandalous carriage.' Accordingly, on Nov. 30, 1701, Alex^r Selcraige, after receiving a public rebuke before the pulpit, 'made an acknowledgment of his sin in disagreeing with his brothers, and promised amendment in the strength of the Lord, and so was dismissed.'—Collet's Relics of Literature, 1823, pp. 342–4.

ll. 1, 3. Here we have an instance of what have often been called 'Irish rhymes'—the word 'sea' rhyming with 'survey.' These are not properly Irish, but archaic rhymes, and are interesting as shewing the changes that have taken place in the pronunciation of words, especially of those in which the letters *ea* are found together. The scrupulous Pope made 'sea' rhyme with *they* (Sappho to Phaon, l. 222), and with *day* (First Book of Statius, l. 279); and 'seas' with *surveys* (ibid. l. 472). He also has 'ease' rhyming with *days* (Im. of Hor., epist. ii. 1, l. 108), and with *plays* (Roxana, l. 15); and 'pease' with *days* (Farewell to London, v. 12). Again he gives us 'bohea' as a rhyme to *way* (Rape of the Lock, iv. 156); and 'tea' to *away* (ibid. i. 62), to *obey* (ibid. iii. 7), and to *stay* (The Basset-Table, l. 28). Cowper likewise gives us (as his predecessors and contemporaries also did) such rhymes as 'bear' with *ear* (Truth, l. 385), and 'bears' with *appears* (Conversation, l. 172), 'swear' with *ear* (Prog. of Err., l. 129), 'wear' with *clear* (Conversation, l. 166), with *appear* (Hope, l. 44), with *here* (ibid. l. 166), and with *fear* (Tab. Talk, l. 116); and 'break' with *beak* (The Doves, l. 36). Now in these cases it is not easy to decide which of the two

rhyming words has undergone a change of pronunciation. We have all heard, even in the present day, the words 'bear, swear, wear, and break' pronounced occasionally as 'beer, sweer, weer and breek'; and though we are accustomed to condemn such pronunciations as 'provincialisms,' yet it must be remembered that nearly all provincialisms are relics of what was once the ordinary language of the country. Yet we do also find Cowper rhyming 'bears' with *cares* (Prog. of Err., l. 517), and 'wears' with *airs* (Retirement, l. 193). In 'pours' as a rhyme for *flowers* (Table Talk, l. 210), and perhaps in 'dread' for *plead* (Prog. of Err., l. 198), and for *lead* (ibid. l. 545), we have other instances of such changes.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

Poems, 1782, p. 322.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE.

Poems, 1782, p. 347.

BOADICEA.

Poems, 1782, p. 354.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

Poems, 1782, p. 362.

THE COLUBRIAD.

Enclosed in a letter to Unwin, Aug. 3, 1782: printed by Hayley, 1806 p. 37. Cp. The Task, vi. 572.

l. 10. The Count de Grasse wore his periwig turned up, and tied in a loop with a riband. For this new-fangled fashion he was constantly made the subject for caricature.

THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

Written in Sept. 1782: printed by Hayley, 1803, i. 126.

It was composed for Lady Austen: and the poet reluctantly—yet most successfully—adopted the Alexandrine metre, to suit the air to which she sang it. Cowper also wrote a Latin version of this poem.

The flagship 'Royal George,' of 1953 tons, and mounting 108 guns, was deemed the first ship—as she was likewise one of the oldest—in the Navy. On the morning of Aug. 29, 1782, while being careened at Spithead (previously to joining the fleet for the relief of Gibraltar), she heeled over on her larboard side, and sank instantly. She was at the time held by two

anchors at the head. She had nearly 1100 souls on board: and of these only 300, chiefly belonging to the ship's company, were saved. Some 400 of the crew, and at least as many more of the women, children, and others who were taking their farewells of their friends, were lost. Amongst them was Rear-Admiral Richard Kempenfeldt—the 'Captain Sentry' of Addison, and the not unworthy successor of Anson, Boscawen, Rodney, and Hawke, all of whom had commanded in this ill-fated ship. The Admiral (born 1715) was at the moment sitting in his cabin, engaged in writing.

l. 25. *Weigh up the vessel.* As it was important to clear the roadstead in which this enormous wreck had sunk, and where (during the war) large fleets of line-of-battle ships and great convoys of traders filled the anchorage, attempts were made in 1782 and 1783 to 'weigh up the vessel,' by passing under her keel, and otherwise making fast to her, huge cables attached to two ships in the roads above. These operations, conducted (at his own expense) by Mr. William Tracy, of Portsmouth, did not prove successful, and were soon abandoned. In 1839 Col. Pasley, R.E., began a series of successful experiments for blowing up the wreck piecemeal, by charges of gunpowder. The powder was enclosed in canisters, some of which contained more than 2000 lbs. at once. By the help of divers these were connected with the ship by ropes, and fired by the galvanic battery, or by Bickford's fuses (which burn for two minutes under water).

JOHN GILPIN.

Poems, 1785; ii. 343.

Written in Oct. 1782, and first printed in the Public Advertiser of Nov. 14 in that year. See Life, vol. ii, pp. xxvii, xxviii. 'I little thought when I was writing the history of John Gilpin, that he would appear in print. I intended to laugh and to make two or three others laugh, of whom you were one. But now all the world laughs. Well, they do not always laugh so innocently, or at so small an expense. . . . *La bagatelle* has no enemy in me; though . . . strange as it may seem, the most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been written in the saddest mood, and but for that saddest mood perhaps had never been written at all.'—*To Unwin*, Nov. 18, 1782. 'John Gilpin has made a good deal of noise in the world, and perhaps it may not be amiss to show, that though I write generally with a serious intention, I know how to be occasionally merry. The Critical Reviewers charged me with an attempt at humour. John having been more celebrated upon the score of humour than most pieces that have appeared in modern days, may serve to exonerate me from the imputation.' —*To Unwin*, Oct. 20. 1784. Many attempts have been made to identify the 'noble horseman.' Most of these may be dismissed, as proceeding on

the gratuitous assumption that the name, and other details of the story are fictitious. Mr. G. Ellis has pointed out, in his Specimens of Early Eng. Poetry, vol. ii. p. 8, the similarity of the tale to a poem by Sir T. More, entitled 'The Merry Jest of the Serjeant and the Frere'; and suggested a common origin for the two. The story was recited by Lady Austen as one 'which had been told her in her childhood' (S. i. 244). Prof. de Morgan wrote in Notes and Queries for Jan. 14, 1860, 'A learned friend now aged 80 tells me, that his mother told him the story of John Gilpin, *eo nomine*, in his childhood; and said she had heard it when a child' (Second Ser. ix. 33). The Professor further stated, that on the fly-leaf of a book in his friend's possession were these words,—which were 'not written after 1701, and may have been written before that date:'—'To be left att Mr. John Gilpin's House att the Golden Anchor in Cheapside att ye corner of Bread S: London.' In an anonymous volume entitled Collier's Water, Croydon, 1862, we are told (p. 49) that John Gilpin (sprung from a brother of Bernard Gilpin, 'the Apostle of the North.') was sent up out of Westmoreland to be apprenticed to a draper in Fleet Street; that he spent forty years or more in business on his own account, in Newgate Street; that he purchased the 'Old Collier Water Farm' in Surrey; and that he died in 1750, leaving his estate to two married daughters, who became his co-heirs by the early death of his only son (Notes and Queries, Third Ser., ii. 429). Here we have the 'children three' of the ballad, while the date is sufficiently early for the reminiscences of Lady Austen's mother, and of the mother of Prof. De Morgan's friend.

l. 3. The *Train-bands* were the old Militia of London, composed of the most substantial householders of the City.

ll. 3, 92. *èke;*—i.e. also; derived from A.S. *eacan*, to add or increase. Cp. our phrase 'to eke out a living,' &c.

l. 23. A *Calender* is one whose trade is to smooth, trim, and give a gloss to woollen cloths, by the use of the 'calender' (Fr. *calandre*, from Lat. *cylindrus*). This was a hot press, or a 'machine consisting of two or more cylinders, revolving so nearly in contact with each other, that cloth passed between them is smoothed and glazed by their powerful pressure.'—Dict. of Arts, Manufactures and Mines.

l. 100. *A rig* is a trick; to 'run a rig,' is to play tricks. The modern commercial phrase 'to rig the markets' really means to play tricks with them.

l. 142. *Balcóny* here has the accent on the second syllable. This was the more common (though not the invariable) pronunciation of the word in Cowper's day, and is nearer to the Ital. *balcone*, from which it is immediately derived. Its ultimate etymon is the Persian *bála khaneh*, meaning an upper chamber, and in particular the chamber over the gate in a Persian caravanserai; whence the term came to be applied also to the projecting platform, from which such a chamber looked down. This was precisely the position

of the 'barbican' (Mid. Lat. *barbicana*) in a castle; which in all probability was originally a mere projecting window, whence the entrance could be defended, and approaching passengers could be inspected. Hence Mr. Wedgwood supposes *barbican* to be another, and an earlier, corruption of the Persian *bâla khaneh*, the latter having been brought from the East by the Crusaders. (Dict. of Eng. Etymol.)

l. 178. *in merry pin.* This phrase is derived from the old 'peg-tankards.' These, which were mostly of wood, and generally held two quarts of ale, were furnished on the inside with a row of eight pegs as pins one above the other, so that half a pint was contained between each pin. The object of these pegs was to regulate the amount which each person in the company should drink, as he who drank first emptied the tankard as far as the first pin; the second drank down to the next one, and so on to the bottom. This custom is said to have been introduced by S. Dunstan, as a corrective of the Saxon habits of intoxication; and King Edgar passed a law that none should drink *below the pin.* By Archbishop Anselm's Canons, made at the Council held at Westminster in 1102, it was provided that Priests should not frequent drinking-bouts, nor 'drink to the pins:'—'ut Presbyteri non eant ad potationes, nec *ad pinnas bibant.*'—Wilkins, Concil. vol. i. p. 382 (*apud* Pegge, Anonymiana, 1809, p. 183). The custom has given us also the proverbial expressions, 'a peg too low' (used of a person out of spirits); and 'to put in the pin' (that is, to refrain from drinking).

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Poems, 1800; ii. 355.

Written in the first week of March, 1783. The hare was Tiney, 'which died last week.'—*To Bull*, March 7, 1783. 'Upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention: but if after his recovery I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore-feet, spring forward, and bite. He was however very entertaining in his way; even his surliness was matter of mirth, and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner that in him too I had an agreeable companion.'—Account of the Treatment of His Hares, S. iv. 423. Cp. Task, iii. 334.

THE ROSE.

Poems, 1794-5; ii. 347.

Written in June, 1783; first printed in Gents. Mag. for June 1785, p. 474. 'The rose in question was a rose given by Lady Austen to Mrs. Unwin. Some time since, Mr. Bull going to London, I gave him a copy of it,

which he undertook to convey to Nichols, the printer of the Gentleman's Magazine. He showed it to a Mrs. C., who begged to copy it, and promised to send it to the printer's by her servant. Three or four months afterwards, and when I had concluded it was lost, I saw it in the Gents. Mag. with my signature, W. C. Poor simpleton! she will find now perhaps that the rose had a thorn, and that she has pricked her fingers with it.'—*To Lady Hesketh*, Jan. 8, 1787. For this Mrs. C. had 'been weak enough to claim the song' as her own. Miss Seward wrote to Hayley, Mar. 7, 1803, 'It appears to me that the lady who purloined your friend's song "The Rose," had as little good taste as honesty. A quaint affectation of ideas and unscholarlike awkwardness of expression disgrace it. . . According to grammar construction, the word 'which' belongs to the shower, and not to the rose. Cary, Saville, and myself used to laugh at it, as a disagreeable quiz of a ballad, when we believed it a lady's composition. Since Cary has known it to be Cowper's, he told me he had persuaded himself to like it. Such is prejudice!' Miss Seward's grammatical criticism must itself be condemned as incorrect, if we accept the canon laid down in the Selection of English Synonyms, edited by the late Archbishop Whately, 1852, p. 2, as follows:—'"That" is applied to the antecedent *immediately* preceding the relative, and "which" to an antecedent sentence, or part of a sentence. For instance: "I should be unwilling at this juncture to introduce a new question *which* might raise objections." This would imply that the introduction of any question might raise objections, whatever its purport might be; if we said "*that* might raise objections," it would imply that this *individual question* itself might raise them.' On Cowper's use of 'that' as a relative, in preference to 'who' or 'which,' see note on The Task, ii. 600 (vol. ii. p. 234).

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018